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# MEMOIRS

OF

# WILLIAM BECKFORD

OF FONTHILL,

AUTHOR OF "VATHEK."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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# TO THE READER.

It was naturally to be expected that before this time some remembrances of one of the most remarkable men of his day would have appeared in an authentic shape. Every hour after the death of the individual carries into oblivion some trait of character or peculiarity which distinguished him from other men. Delay in such cases is dangerous. "If," said a distinguished writer, "a life be delayed until interest and envy are at an end, we may hope for impartiality, but must expect little intelligence; for the incidents which give excellence to biography are of a volatile and evanescent kind, such as soon escape the memory, and are rarely transmitted by tradition."

The subject of the notices which have been here condensed into a memoir was a public character both as regarded literature and the arts. His history was a striking and singular one; his abilities were of the first order, his taste un-

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questioned. Nothing up to this time has been done to preserve the scanty portions of the materials of that history from oblivion; it cannot, therefore, be deemed uninteresting to present to the public all the information it is likely to receive regarding a name so celebrated.

In carrying out his object, the Editor has to confess obligations to several individuals, some of whom are distinguished names in literature and art, well acquainted with Mr. Beckford. He must claim indulgence upon some points that were beyond his control to render in a fuller manner, which would have increased in consequence that interest of which he still flatters himself there will be discovered no small amount; and, at the same time, to crave it farther for any faults which rested with himself, and the somewhat disjointed nature of his materials. Should the information imparted in these pages be what the Editor has fair reason to expect, of no small amount of general interest, he will not fail to feel both gratified and honoured.

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# CONTENTS OF VOL. I.


CHAPTER I.

PAGE

Derivation of the Beckford Family — The Elder Beckford . . . . . 1

CHAPTER II.

Political Career of the Elder Beckford—Decease and Character . . . . . 35

CHAPTER III.

William Beckford the Younger — His Birth and Education . . . . . 71

CHAPTER IV.

Studies at Geneva — Society there — Saussure—Bossuet — Huber — The Chartreuse—Voltaire—Country Tour—Visit to the Continent—Holland 128

CHAPTER V.

Munich—Mittenwald — Rhenish Rafts — Youthful Imaginings . . . . . 166


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## CHAPTER VI.

PAGE

Arrival in England—Cessation of Pupillage—Rejoicings on Coming of Age — Second Tour Abroad—Love of Rural Scenes—Venice again—Padua—The Campagna—Naples—Al Raoui—Poetical Essays . . . . . 201

## CHAPTER VII.

History of Caliph Vathek—Author's Remarks regarding its Different Editions—Machinery of—Notices regarding—Marriage—Residence at the Chateau de la Tour—Death of Lady Margaret—Fonthill . . . . . 242

## CHAPTER VIII.

Visit to Portugal and Spain—Mistakes regarding the Residence there—Byron's Childe Harold—Narrations of Travellers — Falmouth and its Vicinity—The Portuguese Character—The Marialvas—Reflections—Honours to St. Anthony 277

## CHAPTER IX.

Portuguese Entertainments—Low Calibre of Mind—Padre Duarte—The Penalva Family—Odorous Gardens—Villa Ramalhaô—Senhora da Penha, Prior of Aviz—Mafra—Heretic English Woman—Her Conversion—Her Funeral—The Grand Inquisitor—A Snug Dinner—The Rock of Lisbon—Penha Verda—The Queen—St. Vincent the Martyr . . . . . 313

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# MEMOIRS

OF

# WILLIAM BECKFORD.

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## CHAPTER I.

### DERIVATION OF THE BECKFORD FAMILY—THE ELDER BECKFORD.

Not far from Tewkesbury, in Gloucestershire, there is a parish called Beckford, from whence the family of that name, recorded in the present work, is generally supposed to be derived. Before the time of Edward the Confessor, the manor is said to have been the property of the English crown, and, antiquaries contend, was originally denominated Bekeford, or Beceford, after the name of a passage or ferry which once existed over the little river Carron, which passes through what is now called Beckford parish, and



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falls into the Shakespeare Avon, near Tewkesbury, where, it may be recollected, the Avon falls into the Severn. Beke, or Bece, is said to signify a stream of water, an etymology not at all improbable, more particularly as the adjoining parish formerly had the name of Bekeshore, or the shore of the stream.

It would also appear that this manor once belonged to the Chamberlain of Normandy. About the time of Henry I., from becoming royal property in the time of the Conqueror, it was granted by the Chamberlain, to whom it afterwards fell, to the Abbey of St. Barbe en Auge. This was one of the alien priories, suppressed by Henry VI., presented to Eton College by that monarch, and subsequently, by Edward IV., to Fotheringhay priory or nunnery, according to Tanner's *Notitiæ*.

That a family named Beckford, or Bekeford, was settled in the county before the Norman conquest, as before stated, cannot be disproved. Robert de Bekeford is mentioned early in the twelfth century, as making certain grants in the vicinity. In the reign of Richard II. the name of Alexander de Beckford occurs in a grant

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of lands in an adjoining parish, little more than fourscore years afterwards. A Sir William Beckford fought at Bosworth Field, where he is supposed to have fallen, combatting for Richard III.

From the day of the battle of Bosworth Field a cloud appears to hang over a family that had struggled in behalf of the unsuccessful against the successful usurper. The alternative of a peaceful obscurity was all that remained to the survivors to ensure their personal safety. Kindness to his foes, though vanquished, was not, any more than pecuniary generosity, a virtue of Henry VII., save when the argument of good policy overcame his naturally coarse and avaricious character. It is probable the lands of the Beckford family were thus irretrievably lost.

In the reign of Edward VI., the lands in the parish of Beckford were presented by the crown to Sir Richard Lee; nor are there any traces of the family from that time until the name of PETER BECKFORD occurs in 1702, in the reign of William III., as lieutenant-governor of Jamaica, the governor being William Selwyn. The battle of Bosworth Field was fought in 1485.



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That there is a blank of two hundred and seventeen years in the history of the family to be supplied is thus clear, if it be the same family.

King William having appointed William Selwyn to be the governor of the island of Jamaica, he died soon after his arrival. The council of the island then elected Peter Beckford, Esq., to act as lieutenant-governor in Mr. Selwyn's room, and he governed the island at King William's death in 1702, and also proclaimed Queen Anne. He was president of the council and commander-in-chief of the army. Besides distinguishing himself against the French, his great opulence gained him a superiority over most of the planters. T. Handasyd, Esq., was sent out from England as lieutenant-governor soon afterwards. Mr. Beckford died suddenly, in a fit of passion, in 1710, and left behind him two sons, Peter, the elder son, Speaker of the House of Assembly for the island, and Thomas. He was twice married. His first wife, BRIDGET, died in 1691; his second, ANNE BALLARD, in 1696 (the names of Colonels Ballard and Beeston occur in the island as early as 1662). PETER BECKFORD the son, who had become Speaker of

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the House of Assembly died in 1735; having married Bathsua, (daughter and coheir of Colonel Julines Hering,) who died in 1750, and he left issue:—

CHARLES, who died an infant, 1677.

PRISCILLA, born 1675.

ELIZABETH, born 1678.

THOMAS BECKFORD was killed by a gentleman whom he had offended, in 1731. Thos. Beckford married, first, MARY TOLDERBY, and, secondly, MARY, heiress of Thomas Ballard, of whom mention will presently be made again.

PETER BECKFORD, the above Speaker of the House of Assembly of Jamaica, had thirteen children, viz.:—

PETER, who died unmarried in 1737, leaving his next brother, William, his heir.

WILLIAM (afterwards of Fonthill), Lord Mayor of London in 1762 and in 1770; father of the subject of these memoirs, who married, 1756, first, MRS. MARCH, widow of Francis March, Esq., by whom he had one child, a daughter; secondly, MARIA, daughter and coheir of the Hon. George Hamilton, M.P. for Wells, who died 1798, leaving one son, who died 1844.

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RICHARD BECKFORD, M.P. for Bristol, a barrister, who died unmarried, at Lyons, in 1756. He was an alderman of London for the ward of Farringdon, and left his brother, William, his heir.

NATHANIEL BECKFORD, who died unmarried, 1739.

JULINES BECKFORD, of Stapleton, Dorset, M.P. for Salisbury, who died 1765. He married Elizabeth, heiress of Solomon Ashley, of Ledgers Ashby, co. Northampton, who died 1762.

FRANCIS BECKFORD, of Basing, died 1768. Twice married; his first wife, Albinia, daughter of the Duke of Ancaster and Kesteven, who died 1754; secondly, Susanna, daughter of Richard Love, of Basing.

ANNE BECKFORD, married to George Ellis, chief justice of Jamaica, died 1745.

THOMAS, a twin with Richard, died young.

GEORGE, died young.

PHILLIS and BATHSHUA, died unmarried.

ELIZABETH, died 1791; married, first, Thos. Howard, Earl of Effingham, who died 1763; secondly, Sir George Howard, K.B., field-marshal, died 1796.

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WILLIAM BECKFORD, jun., deceased in 1844, the only son of William, the lord mayor, by Maria Hamilton, married the daughter of the Earl of Aboyne, the Lady Margaret Gordon, who died in 1786, and left issue.

MARGARET MARIA ELIZABETH, married to Major-General James Orde. She died in 1818, leaving two daughters, Margaret Juliana Maria, born 1814; and Susannah Jemima Frances, born 1816.

SUSANNAH EUPHEMIA, married to the Duke of Hamilton and Brandon, 1810, who had issue:

WILLIAM ALEXANDER, the present Duke of Hamilton and Brandon (1858), born 1811; and

SUSAN, born 1814, married to the Duke of Newcastle, and afterwards divorced.

This might suffice to exhibit the early position of the subject of this memoir; but the reader may be gratified by a brief mention of the descendants of the brethren of the celebrated lord mayor, as they stood a few years ago. The brothers, Peter, Richard, Nathaniel, Thomas, and George, died without issue. Julines, of Stapleton, left Peter Beckford, M.P. for Morpeth,

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who died in 1811; having married Louisa, daughter of Lord Rivers, who died 1791. Peter Beckford left issue, a son and daughter; the latter, Frances, married Henry Seymer, of Handford, Dorset; the former, William Horace Beckford, of Stapleton, heir presumptive to the barony of Rivers of Sudely Castle, who married Frances Hall Rigby, of Mistley Hall, Essex, and had issue, George and Horace Beckford; and two daughters, Frances and Harriet.

Francis Beckford, of Basing, had two sons, Thomas and Francis Love; and one daughter, Charlotte, married to John Middleton, of Weybridge. Thomas died unmarried. Francis married Joanna Leigh, of Northcourt, Isle of Wight, and had six sons and one daughter: Francis Love, born 1789; William, born 1790; John Leigh, born 1791; Carleton, born 1794; Charles Douglas, 1797; Thomas, who died young; and Harriet, married to Andrew Arcedecne.

Anne Beckford, the lord mayor's sister, had issue: George, John, William Beckford, and Robert Julines Ellis; and a daughter, who died unmarried. George Ellis, of Jamaica, who died

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in 1754, married, first, Susanna Charlotte Long, who, on his decease, married Sir D. Lindsey, Bart. John, who died 1782, married Elizabeth Palmer. William, who died about 1782, married Susanna Jackson, relict of William Addenbrooke. Robert Julines died unmarried. From George descended George Ellis, of Sunning Hill, who died in 1815. John, leaving John, born 1788, and Charles Parker, born 1794; and three daughters, Eliza, born 1791; Caroline, 1793, married to J. P. Carew, of Antony, Cornwall; and Antonetta, born 1803. John, who died 1782, also left C. Rose Ellis, of Claremont, Surrey, M.P. for Seaford, married the heiress of Lord Hervey, and died 1802, leaving issue, Charles, Lord Howard de Walden, born 1799; Augustus Frederick, born 1800; and Eliza Georgiana, born 1802. William Beckford Ellis had issue, William Beckford, who died unmarried; Robert, and Anne, who died 1782. Robert Julines and Bathsua Ellis died unmarried.

Elizabeth Beckford, married to Lord Effingham, had issue, Thomas, Richard, Elizabeth, Anne, Maria, and Frances Hering. Thomas

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died, governor of Jamaica, 1791. Richard, the last earl, died, *s. p.*, 1816. Elizabeth married Reginald Courtenay, Bishop of Exeter, and died 1815; Anne married Christopher Carleton, died 1787; Maria married Guy Carleton, Lord Dorchester, who died 1808; Frances Hering died unmarried.

Of the six children of Elizabeth, the sister of the Lord Mayor Beckford, only two left issue; Elizabeth, who married the Bishop of Exeter, and Maria, who married Lord Dorchester. The descendants of Elizabeth by the bishop were William, M.P., born 1777, who married Harriet Leslie, daughter of Sir Lucas Pepys, Bart., and had male issue, William Reginald, Henry Hugh, and Charles Leslie: Thomas Peregrine, M.P., born 1782, married Anne Mayow, and had issue, Thomas Peregrine, born 1810; Reginald, 1813; George Henry, 1814; Francis, 1816; Anne Mayow, 1807; Elizabeth Howard, 1808; and Mary, 1811. Elizabeth, a maid of honour to Queen Charlotte, born 1779; Catherine, married to the Rev. E. Berens, born 1781; and Anne, born, 1784. Francis Charlotte, married to the Rev. E. Bouverie.

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Maria had, by Lord Dorchester, Guy and Thomas Carleton, who died *s. p.*; Christopher, who died in 1806, married Priscilla Belford, and left issue, Arthur Henry, Lord Dorchester, born 1805; Maria, who married Lord Bolton; George, killed at Bergen-op-Zoom, 1814, who left issue by Henrietta King, of Askham Hall; Guy Carleton, and others. Frances, who married the Rev. J. Orde, and died in 1812, leaving issue. Charles, Dudley, and, lastly, Richard, married to Frances Louisa Horton, of Catton.

It will be recollected that Peter Beckford, from whom all the foregoing are descendants, had a brother named Thomas, who was killed in 1731, having married, first, Mary Tolderby, of the island of Jamaica, and, secondly, Mary, daughter of Thomas Ballard. By this last-named lady he had Ballard, who died in Jamaica, 1760, having married Anne, daughter of John Clark, governor of New York; Thomas, who married Elizabeth, daughter of Robert Pollnitz Byndlosse, of Jamaica, brother-in-law to the buccaneer, Sir H. Morgan; he died 1746; and, lastly, Charles, born 1712. Of these, Ballard, who died in 1764, married Frances Buckner,

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and left one daughter, Mary, who married James Johnstone. Thomas Ballard, the son of Thomas, died 1747, *s. p.*; Philip, the second son, died without issue; Matthew died without issue; Jane Mary, married T. Hay, Esq., and died 1754; Mary Ballard, sole heiress of Thomas Beckford, married, first, John Palmer, of Jamaica, and died 1757, *s. p.*; and, secondly, Edward Long, of Aldermaston, Berks; she died in 1797, leaving three sons, Edward Beeston, born 1763 married Mary daughter of J. Tomlinson, M.P. for Steyning, and left two sons, Edward Noel and Henry Lawes, and a daughter named Mary; Robert Ballard; Charles Beckford, of Woolhampton, born 1771, who married Fanny Monro Tucker, having issue, Charles Edward, born 1796; Catherine, who married Richard Dawkins, by whom she had issue, Edward James, Juliana Charlotte, Emily, and Caroline. Charlotte, who married Sir G. Pocock, Bart., of Hart, by whom she had George Edward, Edward Osborne, Mary Anne Sophia, Charlotte Catherine Elizabeth, and Augustus. Elizabeth, who married Lord Molyneux Howard, brother of the Duke of Norfolk, by whom she had Henry Long, of Greystock

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Castle; and four daughters, Henrietta, Isabella, Charlotte, and Juliana.

It is unnecessary to pursue these details to a later period. It is to be feared that from 1655, when the expedition of Penn and Venables conquered Jamaica under Cromwell, to the decease of Peter Beckford, Lieut-governor of the Island in 1702, nothing more can be now known than is here detailed. Whether Lieut-Governor Beckford went out with a colonel's commission from England, or had his parentage in the island from one who had proceeded there from home afterwards, cannot be ascertained. One thing is certain that the affairs of the island were very irregularly carried on during the last half of the seventeenth century. The island became the rendezvous of the most profligate and lawless adventurers that ever roved over the ocean. It was there they disposed of the spoils of robberies and murders, dissipated the proceeds of their cruel piracies in every species of profligacy, and were so little exposed to reprobation, that one of the most atrocious monsters in human shape, whose adventures are detailed in the well-known "History of the Buccaneers," was knighted by

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Charles II., and was thrice Lieutenant-Governor of the Island; the first time in 1675, the second time in 1678, and lastly in 1680. The crimes of the man thus preferred make the blood run cold to read them. From hence may be inferred the character of some whom the colonists harboured during the first half a century after the conquest of the island, and by whose lavish waste they were enabled to enrich themselves.

However the foregoing circumstances may really have occurred, it is certain that the family of Beckford had large possessions in Jamaica, and were opulent and influential there before the commencement of the last century. Beckford Town, in the county of Cornwall, in Westmoreland parish, near Savannah le Mar, was the property of Richard Beckford. Esher was one of the estates of William Beckford, situated in Ballard's valley, and two estates named the Whitehall and Frontier estates, were the property of Ballard Beckford. Of the large possessions of most of the family in Jamaica, therefore, there can be no question, and they appear to have belonged to it at an early period after the oc-

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cupation of the island by England. Peter Beckford left behind him great wealth. Besides mortgages and similar investments, he had no less than twenty-four plantations and twelve hundred slaves of his own in the island. He was father of the member for the city of London.

It will now be proper, following the direct course of narration, to return to William Beckford the elder, of Fonthill, second son, and Speaker of the Jamaica House of Assembly, previously to going at some length into the more immediate subject. He was scarcely less remarkable in his day, particularly as a public character and supporter of the greatest minister that ever ruled the destinies of the British Empire, if boldness, eloquence, and success, be qualities attached to an individual fulfilling that high character, at a moment when the liberty of the subject was perilled, and England continually made the victim of the notorious predisposition of the House of Hanover for its paternal domains.

He was sent from Jamaica to England at the age of fourteen, and was immediately put to

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school at Westminster, where he devoted himself to his studies so ardently as to obtain repeatedly the applause of Dr. Friend, the chief master, a teacher in those days of considerable reputation. At this school young Beckford formed an acquaintance with many individuals who became noted in after-life for talent or genius. His intimacy began here with Lord Mansfield, Dr. Johnson, Bishop of Gloucester, and Lord Kinnoul, the three last then known in the school as "the triumvirate," from being the best scholars and makers of extempore verses. Here young Beckford translated several of the classical authors, which he wrote out in a fair hand, and preserved until they were consumed by the fire at the old mansion of Fonthill.

It is probable that being a second son, and his next younger brother, Richard, being a barrister, he was not without some professional pursuit from the time he left school to his father's decease. The latter died in 1737, only two years before his elder brother, to whom William became heir, as well as of his brother Richard, M.P. for Bristol. By the latter he obtained ten thousand a-year. It appears he remained in

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Europe, and was here at the time of his father's decease. He perhaps acted as his agent. It is certain he was in Europe for a good part of the time, if not all, from a singular event in the history of his life. He was induced to visit Holland, where he was deeply smitten with a beautiful girl, the daughter of a shopkeeper of Leyden. He was well aware that his family would not consent to his marriage with the object of his affections, towards whom there can be no doubt of his sincere regard, and of his determination to marry her the moment it was in his power to do so. He had a son by her, which he kept a secret until his father's decease, having brought her over, and placed her in an establishment suitable to his rank and fortune. His arrangements had not long been completed, when he was obliged to go to Jamaica in consequence of his father's death, to arrange his family affairs. He was detained above a year. At the expiration of that time he returned to London, intending to marry the object of his cherished affection, all obstacles to a union being removed. On his arrival he made the painful discovery of her unfaithfulness. It was no com-



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mon example of feminine infidelity that struck him down. His beloved mistress, whom he intended to make his bride, he discovered to be far gone in the family way by a mulatto page, in his service, only sixteen years of age. This incident so much affected him, that it was thought at one time he would not recover from the state of despondency into which he was thrown by this discovery. Fears were even entertained for his life. He ultimately recovered, settled an annual sum of money upon the unfaithful one, and sent her back to Holland.

Mr. Beckford was chosen member of parliament both for London and Petersfield in 1747. He preferred sitting for London, but presented four hundred pounds to Petersfield for the purpose of aiding to pave the streets, in the way of acknowledgment. In 1753 he managed to get his brother, Richard, returned for Bristol, in the face of a strong opposition; Richard happened to be in Jamaica at the time.

The speeches of Mr. Beckford in the House of Commons were energetic and full of spirit upon all those questions in which he felt an interest. He always made a boast that he was

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no courtier, and that he disdained being a hanger-on upon the smiles of a throne.

When the Hessian and Hanoverian hireling soldiers were so unconstitutionally introduced into England by the ministry, in 1755, Mr. Beckford supported the elder Pitt in the speeches he made in opposition to that measure. In 1759, he spoke against the German war, plainly declaring it was more onerous to the country than the yoke of an enemy. It was clear he had a well-founded horror of the connections we have ever so unfortunately formed with German states. "We pay for every thing, too, at a most exorbitant rate. Here, in these last accounts, I see a charge for a drawbridge valued at eighty thousand pounds. I have in my pocket a letter from one who understands such matters, who declares, that, between man and man, it is at the utmost worth no more than seven thousand. However, the overplus will be a tolerable perquisite in the pocket of the hungry foreigner. God help us! we must pay for all!"

During the election of 1761, the public papers were filled with encomiums upon this patriotic



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member. The following epigram was largely circulated on the occasion:—

"Augusta, see! behold Pitt's generous friend,
Whom all the patriot virtues recommend;
Hear every tongue proclaim him good and great,
Rendering the hero and the man complete!

He was opposed to every distinction between the natives of these islands, and did not approve of those who carried the invidious marks too far. This had reference more particularly to the Scotch, to whom he was somewhat partial, while several of his political friends were of an opposite feeling, owing to the selfish intrigues of Lord Bute.

The vast fortune of the Lord Mayor Beckford permitted him to provide for many Londoners, whom he sent over to Jamaica, where they advanced to opulence, though before they were well nigh destitute. In fact, his entire career was no less singular than active. He reconciled many characters in himself which seemed almost incompatible. He was a planter, member of parliament, magistrate, and alderman; yet he was a man of excellent taste, a

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country gentleman, and somewhat dissipated. He possessed few of the external graces, as far as expression and manner were concerned. His understanding was sound, and his knowledge of British politics, especially as they affected trade and commerce, was very extensive. He was stedfast in his principles, and never to be charged with inconsistency. His manner was not agreeable, but this did not arise so much from ill-temper, or a bad disposition, as from the ardent and impetuous turn of his mind, to the fervour of which he was accustomed to give way. This impetuosity was accompanied by a voice no way harmonious, and by a vehemence of action, which interfered with his delivery as a public speaker, and even inflicted its mischief upon his private conversation, so that it did not afford the pleasure which the communications of one possessing his knowledge and abilities might be supposed to confer. In the House of Commons he sometimes provoked risibility, and at other times was tedious, from no other cause than a neglect of digesting and well arranging the matter he delivered. Notwithstanding such disadvantages in the se-

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nate, he never spoke without conveying sound information to the House upon those subjects on which he ventured to address it. He had no power of touching the heart, or moving the passions—he could not put an opposing member to the blush, though he did sometimes contrive to silence an opponent.

Up to this time the office of the chief magistracy of the city of London had been, for the most part, filled by merchants, and individuals of high weight and influence in the commercial community; and but a few cases had occurred comparatively when it was otherwise. The residence of the leading mercantile men had been within the city walls, while those who possessed residences in the country had them, for the most part, too far beyond the suburbs to go to business and return the same day to dinner. Great was the hospitality then displayed by the wealthy citizens. The leading Sir Balaams of the Exchange had but a few of them began to move to the westward, until the reigns of the first Brunswicks; Bloomsbury and Soho being then the fashionable squares. Grosvenor was only building between 1730 and 1740.

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The characters of the city men in office were many of them highly respectable in business and connections. The chief magistrate had been sometimes a privy councillor of the crown; and some of the aldermen had sat in parliament for other commercial cities. The traditions of the court and royalty within the walls had then some weight in estimating civic importance not only within, as now, but beyond Temple Bar. The traditions of ages do not become oblivious without the lapse of a considerable interval of time; fragment after fragment fall and disappear, and the long shadows of the ruins themselves are no longer seen in the sunset of their age. The influence of the city had been once deservedly great in public affairs. Many of the nobility had had residences within the civic limits; and while it remained eminent for its trade it was the haunt of the high-minded, and the great merchants and bankers, in place of being merely the place of their offices. London proper, now dwindled to a circumference of offices and shops, with a decreasing resident population of no mark, serves only to exhibit the importance that tradition can bestow on the

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fleshless skeletons of perishing recollections. The great merchants and bankers, and the wealthy speculators, have no craving for the honors coveted by their class in the days of the Henrys and the maiden queen. The honors have fallen into the hands of those who, in the social and commercial scale, are of no note, but at the entertainments to which, from the memory of the past, the ministers of the crown attend as if to take a convenient opportunity for saying something desirable through the newspapers. This, attended with some compliment to the host for his cheer once or twice in a season, comprises all that can now recal the civic glory of the past. The real city occupies not more than a sixteenth of the ground on which the metropolis of England stands; and the sway of its chief magistrate is limited to a spot where the dwellings are continually metamorphosing into warehouses and similar conveniences; so, that, while the stranger would talk of the vastness of London,—and the foreigner is astounded at its riches and magnitude,—he is little aware of the increasing insignificance of London so named; and that its elective

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monarchy excites no regard beyond limits comparatively as insignificant as its power.

Never had the city of London, and its political consequences, been regarded by the court otherwise than with that respect which naturally arose from its traditions, and the honourable part it had taken in behalf of the constitutional government of the country. Under the two first princes of the house of Brunswick, support was given to princes who conceded to the free principles of the country they had come to rule, all that could be desired; things went on peaceably, and the citizens had no collision with the throne, for there was no attempt made to encroach on the popular freedom. On the accession of George III., a prince of arbitrary ideas, obstinate in disposition, and labouring much longer, than was generally suspected, under mental delusion, he at once placed public affairs in the hands of Lord Bute, whose gratitude consisted in endeavouring to carry out the royal will against the feeling of the nation; and thus the crown, for the first time after the Hanover succession, came into collision with the citizens and their authorities. Lord Chatham, who had

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raised his country to a higher pitch of glory than any minister had done before him, had resigned; and the ministry involved itself in the most impolitic and unjustifiable collisions with the people. It was at this period that Mr. Beckford had the audacity to make a stand in the city against the northern favorite of George III.

From that time the courtiers and city authorities grew more shy of each other. The later entertainments given by Beckford were most distinctly marked by their party bearing; and the consequence was, the further insulation of the citizens from the crown, as the latter undervalued, or contemned, all that partook of a popular character. Persisting in the same perverse principles, the American war was followed up, and stimulated by every effort of the king to reduce the colonists to servitude; the monarch having declared, he would sooner lay down his crown than make peace with America as an independent state.

The publication of the correspondence of the king with Lord North, subsequently proved that the latter was less to blame than was before

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supposed. The Earl of Chatham and his friends, early resisted the taxation of America, which led to the unhappy war, but in vain. The old constitutional nobility of England was buried under an avalanche of new creations by George III., to the number of fifty-nine in twenty-five years; more than one quarter of the then existing House of Lords. The prerogative and executive power of the crown was thus endeavoured to be raised paramount over all other interests.

The political dispositions of the city and the court may be thus accounted for, as well as the cessation of cordiality between the ministry and the authorities there. Beckford, an alderman of Billingsgate, and his brother Richard, of Farringdon—one in parliament for London, the other for Bristol—were both political connections. Chatham and his friends were supported against the court; and the court leading the people of fashion, its friends deserted the Mansion-house entertainments. The great day of civic glory may be said to have departed soon after that period. The Beckfords and Harleys were political partizans, and the city

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became the rendezvous of their respective colors. The old prestige of queens selected from the daughters of citizens, and princes dwelling within the walls, had long ceased to be a stimulus to hope or to ambition.

It was in 1758 that Beckford served the office of sheriff for the city, being at the same time one of its representatives in parliament. His entertainments were splendid as sheriff. When he was elected Lord Mayor, the first time against his own consent, he was contented with his influence in the city. The civic chair could add neither dignity nor reputation. He had been member of parliament for London from 1747. He gave no less than four entertainments, having been sworn in Lord Mayor Nov. 9, 1762 : these had not been equalled in the city before, from the time of Henry VIII., in splendour and extent of hospitality. He entertained on one occasion the Emperor of Germany and the King of Denmark, accompanied by the Dukes of York and Cambridge. The costly magnificence he displayed astonished the public. He was himself remarkably moderate in eating and drinking, always living with great

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temperance, and hence somewhat out of place in city epicurism.

Beckford's election to the civic chair the first time was when Lord Bute had succeeded in undermining the most successful administration that had ever wielded the destinies of England. Justice was never done to Beckford's zeal and merit in behalf of the freedom of the subject. Having no pursuit in the way of trade or commerce, and fond of the society of his friends, he felt his election to the civic chair a sacrifice both of leisure and private feeling. The solution of his acceptance of it at all was the desire to serve his friends to the utmost, and to direct towards their interests in the state the important influence of the city. His close intimacy with Mr. Pitt, afterwards Earl of Chatham, as well as with Earl Temple, was ardent and enduring. Three times returned for the city to parliament, he uniformly gave his support to the popular minister, it being notorious at this time that the court found its great supporters among place-hunters, and those who had anything to gain, the wealthier individuals supporting the independent interest, or the country, rather than the court.

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Rich, independent, and professing liberal opinions, he was thus constantly found in opposition to the favourites of George III. During his parliamentary services, it was always conceded to him, that his views were those of a man of high integrity: there was no shuffling or evasion in his character. He would never canvass his London constituency. Upon his second election he addressed the London livery as follows:

"Friends and Fellow Citizens—

"You have again been pleased to elect me one of your representatives, with three very worthy gentlemen, in order to transact your business in parliament. I look upon this as the greatest honor that could be conferred upon me. I never have desired nor ever shall desire any other honor or title, than to be a private gentleman, acting as one of your representatives, a free and independent part in parliament.

"I look upon this honor the more, because, as you are sensible, I have never personally solicited your votes and interest. I can assure you, gentlemen, it was not through any want of respect towards the livery of London; for there is no

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man living that regards and reverences it more than I do; but I thought it more becoming and respectful in me, to leave to the independent livery the free choice of its members.

"I have been sensible, gentlemen, that many things have been alleged against me. From mistaken notions I have been represented as a man of arbitrary and despotic principles. I therefore take this opportunity of declaring, in the face of the livery of London, that my principles have ever been, and ever will be, to support the civil and religious liberties of this country—you see, gentlemen, I speak my mind freely. A decent freedom is the first privilege of a member of parliament, and thereby I hope I gave no offence. I am sure I never intended to give any, yet I am certain that while I have sat in parliament, I *have* given offence. I declare thus publicly in regard to this point, that I never said anything against men, I spoke only against measures. The opposition I have sometimes made, was wholly to measures, and not to men. I have felt, as you all know, for the three first days' poll, that resentment operated much stronger than friendship; but I found that

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the friendship of the livery was even stronger than the resentment I encountered—the poll shows it.

"It will be an honor to me to proceed in the same manner I have already done, declaring publicly to every man, that I have no kind of enmity whatever to any particular persons, who, I daresay, have made their opposition to me from a conviction that I have been wrong. You belong, gentlemen, to the first city in the kingdom; you are in point of riches, and in point of influence, superior. Other nations will take an example from your city, I therefore hope that the same independence which you have shown upon every former occasion, will continue to exist, and that you will set an example to all the other cities and boroughs of the kingdom, of that independence and that uncorrupted conduct for which you have always been renowned.

"In some other places we have had frequent experience that the art of canvassing has been very different from what it is in London, and therefore I repeat it, I hope the livery of London will not take it amiss in me that I have not made to them a personal application. I declare

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this and would willingly repeat it—I never did it in my former election, in the election before this—I have not done it in this election, but it was not out of want of respect, but for reasons quite the contrary.

"Gentlemen, as our constitution is deficient only in one point, that little pitiful boroughs send members to parliament on an equality with great cities; and this is contrary to the maxim, that power should follow property; therefore it becomes you of the livery of London to be extremely upon your guard, as you have been upon the present occasion, to choose members that are entirely independent; and I do most heartily congratulate you upon your present choice of the other three members. As to myself, I have nothing to say.

"You have upon all occasions, gentlemen, whenever an attack was made upon the constitution of this kingdom, readily stepped forth and stood in the breach; you have supported the liberties of the nation with firmness and resolution. We are now come to times, gentlemen, when there is no occasion for that firmness, or that resolution; for we have now—praise be to



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God for it—we have now a young monarch upon the throne, whose qualities are amiable, and whose resemblance is exact, in every feature of body and mind, to that great and amiable young prince, Edward the Sixth. You have a truly patriot king, and therefore have no occasion to exercise that firmness and resolution which has been demanded on many other occasions. You have likewise a patriot minister—I say a 'patriot' minister, and therefore it will be your own fault if you are not the happiest people in Europe.

"I will not, gentlemen, trespass more upon your good nature and indulgence; I will conclude with a most sincere prayer and hearty wish, that freedom and independence, and all happiness, may attend this city now and for evermore."

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## CHAPTER II.

### POLITICAL CAREER OF THE ELDER BECKFORD— DECEASE AND CHARACTER.

THERE was one meeting in the Guildhall for the nomination of members of parliament for the city, which will show something of Mr. Beckford's high spirit. He attended in order to justify his conduct from the charge made against him by some of the citizens, "that he had not duly attended, for some time past, his duty as an alderman." The hall was filled. When he came forward to address the Livery, he was received with marks of disapprobation. He attempted to speak for a full hour in vain, encountering nothing but groans and hisses; but he stood firm at his post, and ultimately his perseverance was rewarded, and silence obtained. He then commenced:—



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"Gentlemen of the Livery and fellow-citizens, I thought it my duty to attend here this day, both in justice to you and to your faithful, humble servant. I had been informed, and my present experience convinces me I was truly informed, that a very unfavourable opinion had gone forth against me among my worthy constituents. Permit me to say, gentlemen, with the boldness becoming an honest man, that I have not deserved it. It has been my chief pride to be a representative of the first city in the world, and I shall relinquish such an honour with much concern and mortification; but I will not flatter you in order to obtain a continuance of it. It is my duty to speak out, and act, as I have ever done, with openness and integrity. My abilities may not be equal to those of many other gentlemen whom you may choose to represent you, but I defy you to find any one who will serve you with more zeal and attention than I have done—a zeal and attention, which, give me leave to say, does not deserve the degrading reception I have met with from you this day. I am informed that I am more particularly accused of not regularly attending

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my duty in the Court of Aldermen and elsewhere as one of your magistrates. In some degree I plead guilty to the charge; but I must beg of you to remember, that during the winter, I am engaged in doing my duty as your representative in parliament; and when I am obliged to attend the House of Commons, I cannot attend the Court of Aldermen, for no man can be in two places at the same time. During the summer, gentlemen, I have of late been engaged in doing my duty as an officer in the militia, and thereby promoting, to the utmost of my power, that excellent, necessary, and constitutional establishment; and when I am engaged with the militia I cannot be in the Court of Aldermen. It has been told me also that I have given offence to many of you by not canvassing your votes. I am sorry for it, because I respect you too much, and love the constitution of my country too well, to infringe on the freedom of election, of which in corrupt times this city still continues to give a most glorious example. If you recollect, I did not canvass you at the last general election. I have not canvassed you for the approaching one, and

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I will tell you honestly I never will canvass you; you shall elect me without a canvass or not at all. This is the defence of myself which I have to offer to you. If it should not satisfy you, I must be content to thank you for past favours, and to assure you I shall still have a seat in the House of Commons, and I will continue to exert my best endeavours for your service as I have always done."

A burst of applause followed this high-minded address, and the speaker left the Hall amid marks of approbation that were never exceeded within those walls. He was re-elected, and up to the time of his death, became an increasing favourite with his constituents.

So great a favourite was Mr. Beckford in London, that he was put in nomination for the mayoralty again in November, 1769; an honour which he declined in vain, urging his age and bodily infirmities as an excuse. The show of hands was declared in his favour, being put to the vote with Alderman Trecothick. Having been declared duly elected, he urged that as it was the second time of his election he did not think himself bound to serve, besides being too

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infirm for the duties. The livery still shouted "Alderman Beckford! Alderman Beckford!" He then came forward, and reluctantly assented to their urgent requests, declaring at the same time, that though willing, he was unable to serve, and should take office at the hazard of his life, which proved a foreboding but too true. The livery continued to redouble their cheers, and continued their shoutings; but the object of them was obliged to retire from fatigue. It was then agreed that the Common Council should wait upon the alderman at his house in Soho Square. Here again he pleaded his age and infirmities in vain; being literally pressed into an assent, he reluctantly wrote to the Lord Mayor:—

"My Lord Mayor,

"I cannot resist the importunate requests of my fellow citizens. Their desires have overcome resolutions that I once thought were fixed and determined. The feeble efforts of a worn-out man to serve them can never answer their sanguine expectations.

"I will do my best, and will sacrifice ease

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and retirement, the chief comforts of old age, to their wishes. I will accept the office of Lord Mayor. I shall hope for the assistance of your Lordship, and my brethren of the Court of Aldermen. The advantage and good effect of their advice were experienced on many occasions in my late mayoralty, by your Lordship's

"Most obedient, humble Servant,

W. BECKFORD."

The re-elected Lord Mayor gave a dinner and ball a short time afterwards. Many of the principal nobility of the kingdom attended. The ball was opened by the Duke of Devonshire and the Lady Mayoress. At a preceding entertainment, on a court being held for swearing in an alderman named Byrd, in the room of Sir William Baker, the Lord Mayor also gave a splendid entertainment. On this occasion, fourteen aldermen, in place of attending at the Mansion House, dined together at a private tavern. To understand this display of ill-humour, it must be observed that Mr. Beckford and Mr. Trecothick had been returned by the Common Hall to the Court of Aldermen, to fill the office of

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Mayor. The town-clerk and common-serjeant objected, and produced a document made with a different view, for the purpose of preventing Mr. Beckford's return. This was a bye-law made temp. Henry VI. 1324; it imported that no one should be rechosen to serve the office of Lord Mayor of London, within the term of seven years after his former mayoralty. The reply of the livery was, that there were precedents to the contrary; for example, Sir John Barnard, who had been re-elected within that term. The town-clerk and common-serjeant denied the assertion thus made, and the latter declared Mr. Beckford ineligible. This was clearly done out of spite towards him; and the sheriff in consequence declared, that if there was no precedent, he was bound to prevent the nomination. The city records were then produced, to the dismay of the gentlemen learned in the law, who had declared otherwise. It was shown that Sir John Barnard, who had served the office in 1737, was re-elected in 1740. The town-clerk and common-serjeant became woefully crest-fallen, on the imposition they had deliberately attempted upon the livery being

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thus exposed. The livery became indignant—the common-serjeant made a mean attempt at justification, because Sir John Barnard's election occurred before he, the common-serjeant, was retained for the corporation, with whose concerns he ought to have made himself fully acquainted after taking office. It was with difficulty the uproar was appeased, and the nomination proceeded. Several aldermen were put in nomination, but the show of hands was greatly in favour of Beckford and Trecothick; notwithstanding which, a poll was demanded for Sir Henry Banks. It was a just cause for popular indignation. Even the case quoted by the common-serjeant and town-clerk showed they had gone for the bye-law back to the reign of Henry VI., while Sir John Barnard's re-election occurred in the reign of George II.; and the reason of the bye-law of Henry was given as being to prevent the heavy burden of office from being laid upon those who might not be able conveniently to meet the expense. The town-clerk was named Hodges, and he seems to have been ready to do any kind of party work. His excuses aggravated his offence, and Mr. Beckford was re-

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turned by a triumphant majority; there being for Beckford, 1969; Trecothick, 1911; Banks, 676.

Upon this occasion Mr. Beckford addressed his fellow-citizens, and showed that even the precedents quoted against him only rendered him not compellable, but still left him eligible to serve. The reign of Henry VIII. showed three re-elections, and in the years 1688, 1689, and 1690, Sir T. Pilkington was successively Lord Mayor. Even as late as 1740, Sir John Parsons had been re-elected; and in 1741 Sir John Barnard, within three years of his former mayoralty. The recorder and town-clerk insisted that the bye-laws were still in force. The adverse party wanted counsels' opinion to be taken on the question; but it was overruled, and the court determined to receive the sheriffs' return. Sir Robert Ladbroke made several efforts in vain to proceed to a new election. The recorder then declared that the choice of the aldermen had fallen upon Mr. Beckford, who in vain wished to decline the honour from his age and infirmities; and having quoted a statute of Henry V., to show the state of the country and colonies if obsolete laws were to be

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carried out, he concluded by again reiterating his wish to decline the honour of serving the office. The livery, notwithstanding, became only the more pressing, calling out, "Mr. Beckford, assist to save your country!" "Mr. Beckford is at present Lord Mayor elect!" Of twenty-two aldermen present, sixteen voted for Beckford, and six for Trecothick. Sundry resolutions were also carried, of no moment to detail, and after the livery had been kept on their legs for nine hours, the common hall was adjourned.

When, as before stated, Mr. Beckford had been prevailed upon to take office, he went in great state on the occasion to Westminster Hall, attended by an immense concourse of people. His carriage was drawn by six magnificent horses, purchased abroad at a great price. Only five aldermen and the preceding Lord Mayor accompanied him. The recorder, generally a creature of the party in power, met the new Lord Mayor in the Court of Exchequer, and left him there to return alone, as did others of the city officials. The attendance at the Mansion House the same evening was brilliant beyond example. The absent aldermen gave

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out that their non-attendance was owing to the breach of the regular succession to the chair. The absence of the friends of the minister of the day was compensated by the numerous and splendid bevy of nobles and distinguished characters who honoured him with their company. The Lord Chancellor was the only minister who attended. The public feeling had been strengthened in the Lord Mayor's favour by the dismissal of their favourite Pitt and Lord Rockingham from office. Upon no former occasion was the public indignation more strongly exhibited in the unpopularity of the ministry, who with their friends had no small distaste for the independent conduct of a Lord Mayor, who, amidst all, conducted himself in the course dictated by good sense.

A copy of the celebrated remonstrance which afterwards rendered the ministry and the king himself so indignant, was moved for by the Lord Mayor in the House of Commons, and strongly and violently opposed. On this occasion Beckford justified the part he had taken. He said openly, that he himself had put the question regarding it in the Court of Common

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Council and Common Hall, and though he had legal authority to put a negative upon the Court of Aldermen, he would not do it. He was the great criminal answerable to the charge, and he then stood forward to avow it. Parliament was charged with corruption, and the remonstrance said as much. The fact remained to be proved, and he declared himself ready to abide the issue. His motion was seconded by one of the sheriffs and one of the city members. He had stated in his address that he came forward to vindicate the right of petition. The formidable way in which it was evident the remonstrance from the city was supported by the people, alarmed a ministry destitute of moral courage. The affair with Wilkes, the general discontent expressed regarding the Middlesex election, and the arbitrary conduct of the crown, in which it must not be supposed that the king was neutral, but the reverse, obstinate and arbitrary in disposition as he notoriously was; in all these conflicts the Lord Mayor took his stand on the popular side. He was therefore exceedingly obnoxious to the government. In the year preceding 1767, he presented a petition from the majority of the

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Council of Massachusetts' Bay, which was in opposition to some of the old and the newly contemplated measures in relation to the taxation of America, "signed, in behalf of the petitioners," by the chairman, J. Doniforth. The house slighted it by the excuse that it was only the petition of one individual, and ordered it to lie upon the table. He expressed his sense of the injustice of taxing America, insisted on the non-existence of any such right, and exposed the ridiculous character of the establishment of revenue officers there. These it appeared cost £500,000, and they returned £295 collected! Mr. Grenville, the author of the baneful measure which cost England the colonies for ever, insisted, by the unanswerable argument of a treasury majority, that the step was just and necessary.

The argument regarding Wilkes used by Beckford, was, that the House of Commons could only bind itself. If by a vote alone it could disqualify one person, it could do so by others up to any number, by which means it could wield the whole power of the government. He bade the house take care and remember the story of Rehoboam, son of King Solomon, when

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the ten tribes of Israel revolted from his rule: let the ministry apply the story to itself.

When Mr. Pitt (Lord Chatham) received honours from the crown which were wholly unsolicited, upon his resignation of office, his enemies made it a reflection upon his character. Some of his friends censured him, as not exhibiting that independence of spirit which had marked his conduct upon all other occasions. His lordship, when he resigned the seals, wrote a letter addressed to a person in the city, in the way of a justification, giving his reasons for his conduct. That person was Beckford. The latter replied characteristically :—

"DEAR SIR,

"The citizens of London, as long as they have any memory, cannot forget that you accepted the seals when this nation was in the most deplorable circumstances to which any country can be reduced: our armies were beaten, our navy inactive, our trade exposed to the enemy, our credit as if we expected to become bankrupt, sunk to so low a pitch, that there was nothing to be found but despondency at

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home, and contempt abroad. The city must also for ever remember, that when you resigned the seals our armies and navies were victorious, our trade secure and flourishing more than in a peace, our public credit restored, and people readier to lend than ministers to borrow. Then there was nothing but exultation at home, confusion and despair among our enemies—amazement and veneration among all neutral nations; that the French were reduced so low as to sue for peace, which we from humanity were willing to grant, though their haughtiness was too great, and even our successes too many, for any terms to be agreed upon. Remembering this, the city cannot but lament that you have quitted the helm. But if knaves have taught fools to call your resignation (when you can no longer procure the same success, being prevented from passing the same measures) a desertion of the public; and to look upon you for accepting a reward, which can scarcely bear that name in the light of a pensioner; the citizens of London hope they shall not be ranked by you among the one or the other. They are truly aware, then, that though you cease to guide the helm,



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you have not deserted the vessel, and that, conscious as you are, your inclination to promote the public good, is still only to be equalled by your ability, that you sincerely wish success to the new pilot, and will be ready not only to warn him and the crew of rocks and quicksands, but to assist in bringing the ship through the storms into a safe harbour.

"These, sir, I am persuaded, are the real sentiments of the city of London—I am sure you believe them to be such of,

"Dear sir,

"Yours, &c."

A debate in the House of Commons a few months before his decease, will afford a specimen of Mr. Beckford's manner of speaking in parliament. An amendment had been moved to the address of thanks by the introduction of a few words on the motion of Mr. Dowdeswell, to enquire into the causes of the "unhappy discontents which at present prevail in every part of his Majesty's dominions."

"I rise, Mr. Speaker, to support the sentiments of my honourable and worthy friend who

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has proposed the amendment. The silence of the Ministers, with respect to the complaints of the people, is an insult as gross and cruel as oppression and insolence ever offered to any people. It is aggravated, too, by substituting something in the place of the evil against which they have petitioned, that has no real existence. They have given us a windmill for a giant; they have endeavoured to conceal fire by smoke; the distemper among the cattle, which has been made the subject of a tedious harangue, exists nowhere: or if it does exist anywhere, it is in obscurity; and what then can we think of distempers of such a character? What is there lurking in the dark but works of darkness which must disappear in the blaze of noonday? The petitions of the people are not of this kind; they were not produced in the dark, or in a corner; they are the works of daylight, and were fabricated as it were upon the house-tops. These, however, are wholly neglected, and that which is dark and obscure is made the substance of a speech, a speech which indeed excluded anything pretending to importance, let the shape be what it might. No notice is taken of an impending



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war. Can the Minister hope to conceal what must so soon be manifest from its effects? Does he hope, like the ostrich, by running the head of this war into a bush, we shall lose sight of its body? Does he think that because the desertion of the island of Corsica, and the addition of that island to the power of France, has caused a war with that powerful and insidious neighbour, more dangerous to him as well as to us, and therefore rendered it convenient for him not to see it, that therefore it will be less seen by others? France is now arming in all her ports,—arming by land and sea; and though she was beaten during the last war by a series of successes on our part, almost without example, she is, notwithstanding her defeats, preparing vigorously for other conquests. Spain is arming with the same diligence, and there are already troops in America menacing our colonies.

"These are objects that demand attention, and yet no attention is paid to them. The Minister would indeed mention them with an ill grace, who had taken none of the measures which precaution points out. But though one neglect and one fault naturally produce others,

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the second is no excuse for the first. England is the only power in Europe which is not in a condition to go to war; but that is no reason why circumstances should be concealed which make it probable other nations should go to war with her. Perhaps the Minister has arts in contemplation for practice, that are not fit to meet our ears, by which he hopes to avoid a war. He may be, and probably is, as servile and submissive abroad, as he is tyrannical and oppressive at home. Sir, servility and submission will not answer his purpose; while they may increase our dishonour, they will not secure us from danger. If France feels her superiority—a superiority alone arising from the ignorance and supineness of our ministers—can it be supposed that she will forego any advantage which enables her to procure, in consequence of submission on our part, that which, though they may flatter her, she must despise?

"I am for no such servile, slavish, tame, temporizing measures. I am for striking the first blow, whether we are in a condition to do so or not. I have many reasons for this opinion, of which I will mention but one. Everybody

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in the kingdom has, among other grievances, suffered by the scarcity of silver; a Spanish war is the only means by which this evil can be remedied. My zeal may perhaps have carried me away from the immediate object in view, but the expedience of the amendment proposed by the hon. gentleman to the address, is too manifest to need any further enforcement."

But the one celebrated act of the elder Beckford's political life, was his conduct on the remonstrance of the city of London, which the ministry had treated disdainfully.

It was on the 13th of May, 1770, in his second mayoralty, that at a common council it had been moved, "That an humble address, remonstrance, and petition, be presented to his Majesty, (George III.) touching the violated right of election, and the applications of the livery of London, and his Majesty's answer thereupon," when his Lordship made a spirited speech on the occasion. Protests had been signed in the House of Lords against the proceedings of the ministers as dangerous to popular rights. On the 1st of May, Lord Chatham brought in a bill for reversing the adjudication

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of the House of Commons in the affair of John Wilkes, which was negatived. On the 14th of March preceding, a humble address and remonstrance from the city, condemning the minister, was presented, signed by the town clerk. This was pronounced a most disrespectful act. A second humble address was presented May 23rd in the same year. This second drew from the King the following reply to the Lord Mayor.

"I should have been wanting to the public as well as to myself, if I had not expressed my dissatisfaction at the late address.

"My sentiments on that subject continue the same; and I should ill deserve to be considered as the father of my people, if I could suffer myself to be prevailed upon to make such a use of my prerogative, as I cannot but think inconsistent with the interests and dangerous to the constitution of the kingdom."

Mr. Beckford here requested leave to reply, which being accorded, he addressed the King as follows:—

"MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,

"Will your Majesty be pleased so

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far to condescend as to permit the Mayor of your loyal city of London, to declare in your royal presence, on behalf of his fellow-citizens, how much the bare apprehension of your Majesty's displeasure, would at all times affect their minds. The declaration of that displeasure has already filled them with inexpressible anxiety, and with the deepest affliction.

"Permit me, Sire, to assure your Majesty, that your Majesty has not in all your dominions any subjects more faithful, more dutiful, or more affectionate to your Majesty's person and family, or more ready to sacrifice their lives and fortunes in the maintenance of the true honour and dignity of your crown.

"We do therefore, with the greatest humility and submission, most earnestly supplicate your Majesty, that you will not dismiss us from your presence without expressing a more favourable opinion of your faithful citizens, and without some comfort—without some prospect, at least of redress.

"Permit me, Sire, further to observe, that whosoever has already dared, or shall hereafter endeavour by false insinuations and suggestions,

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to alienate your Majesty's affections from your loyal subjects in general, and from the city of London in particular, and to withdraw your confidence in, and regard for your people, *is an enemy to your Majesty's person and family, a violator of the public peace, and a betrayer of our happy constitution as it was established at the* GLORIOUS AND NECESSARY REVOLUTION."

The Lord Mayor waited a few moments for a reply: no reply was given, the King became flushed with angry feeling, and the Lord Mayor withdrew.*

* There is now a fashion prevalent of gratuitously contradicting the records of the past. Richard III. has been proclaimed an ill-used prince: Shakespeare did not write the plays attributed to him, and there never was such a personage as Homer! Horne Tooke was reported to have had a hand in drawing up the address spoken so effectively by Beckford—this is an old story, and he may or not have been consulted on the occasion. But it is further asserted that no such address was ever spoken by Beckford at all! What was the Bute party about at the time, that they suffered this truly excellent address to stand a fact as to its delivery—that they did not contradict it instanter through their hirelings, but that nearly a century afterwards it remained for some one not less impudent than ignorant in the matter to coin a denial of it!

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After this spirited and far-famed rejoinder, the Lord Mayor had to go up to the court with an address of congratulation from the city on the birth of a royal child. Upon this occasion displaying the animus of royalty—for George III. was an ill-bred man—the Lord Mayor was kept waiting in an anti-chamber for a considerable time. At length the Lord Chamberlain came out with a paper in his hand—"As your Lordship thought fit to speak to His Majesty after the answer to the remonstrance, I am to acquaint your Lordship, that as it was unusual, his Majesty desires that nothing of the kind may happen for the future."

Mr. Beckford died at his house in Soho Square, June 21st, 1770, at five o'clock in the morning. He had travelled to town from Fonthill to discharge his official duties while labouring under a severe cold, which ended in a rheumatic fever.

He possessed an undaunted spirit, and great democratic pride. He was above all inclination or temptation to become the creature of a court by the usual low means of bribe or place. The first he did not want, he was wealthy as man could desire; the second he despised, because it

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was seldom the reward of talent or virtue. He could therefore well afford to be opposed to the ministry at a time when the liberty of the subject was placed in jeopardy by the government.

In parliament, as well as in private society, his voice was crude and inharmonious, nor could he speak without great vehemence of action even in the social hour. Perhaps from being a native of the torrid zone, his feelings were too warm for the conventional impassiveness of the north. Hence he did not often afford the pleasure or communicate the instruction he might have done, from his extensive knowledge and undoubted talents, while he supported the Pelham administration. He was deemed rough by strangers and somewhat crabbed, which were the results of an impetuous and ardent disposition which he had not the power to control; and of these the creatures of the court made the most to his detriment. He sometimes caused a smile in the House of Commons, and at others failed to interest from the rapidity of his utterance, and the quick flow of his thoughts preventing the due arrangement of his matter; the best orators being cool men, of limited fancy and few ideas.

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Sometimes he was led away into the discussion of subjects of which he was by no means the competent master; but this was balanced by his unimpeachable integrity. He considered it a bounden duty to defer to the instructions of his constituents. He presented petitions in parliament, to the prayer of which he did not give his assent, but as chief magistrate of London he thought himself bound to act in accordance with those who returned him to the senate.

He was exceedingly generous, and his liberality in the city astonished traders living only to accumulate. He was a great encourager of the arts, and possessed a noble collection of paintings, placed at Fonthill, which he made one of the finest places in the West of England. The materials of his house there, when pulled down by his son, sold for ten thousand pounds. The house he built was much injured by an accidental fire, and many precious things were consumed; but its owner speedily rebuilt the portion destroyed, at an expense of thirty thousand pounds.

He left one son, William, by his second wife, and several illegitimate children whom he had

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before his first marriage, and after his love disappointment already mentioned. To each of his children he left five thousand pounds, having carefully educated them. His eldest married a lady of fortune, and settled in Jamaica.

He was remarkably generous to the instructors of his children, and to all persons concerned in the work of education. He paid them liberally, and made them handsome presents, because, he said, much depended upon their exertions; the task was weighty, and ought to be well remunerated. In like manner he gave considerable sums to charities for the instruction of youth; every thing he did being marked by plain good sense.

He kept up the splendour of his entertainments to the last. Subsequently to those already mentioned, he gave one on the 22nd of March, 1770, the splendour of which eclipsed anything of the kind prepared in the city within human memory, and never since approached. He was anxious to see the distance lessened between the conflicting parties in the state. After a debate which he fancied had some approximation to what he desired, he invited

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the members of both houses of parliament to dine with him. The respectability of the city was, as yet, fully maintained among people of rank, it not having fallen to its existing *vox et præterea nihil.* The usual dining apartments of the Mansion House would not accommodate his guests, and all the rooms that could be applied to the purpose were occupied. The unparalleled munificence and novelty of the occasion attracted great attention. The guests went in procession to the city from the Houses of Parliament. Six dukes, two marquises, twenty-three earls, four viscounts, fourteen barons, and eighteen baronets, were among those who attended. This dinner cost the Lord Mayor, on his private account, £10,000.

At this dinner the Lord Mayor gave among other toasts, but a month or two before his death:

"May justice and wisdom ever follow the public councils."

"May the fundamental liberties of England be revered and defended."

"May the noble assertors and protectors of English liberty be held in perpetual remembrance."

"May the violators of the rights of elec-

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tion, and petitioning against grievances, be confounded."

"May the wicked be taken away from before the king, that his throne may be established in righteousness."

"May corruption cease to be the weapon of the government."

"May the spirit of the constitution prevail over secret and undue influence."

"Lord Chatham and our absent friends."

The dinner, consisting of six hundred dishes, was served upon plate.

At this banquet it is said to have been the Lord Mayor's intention to propose to his guests an agreement for their signature, binding them while in public life to speak and act purely by the dictates of conscience, and to pledge themselves to maintain inviolably the integrity of the constitution, without views of ambition or aggrandisement, unaccompanied by place, pension, promotion, or any personal advantage whatever. Thus, if they apostatised, they would proclaim their own infamy, and lose for ever the public respect. The Marquis of Rockingham, disapproving of such a proceeding,

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it was not urged; but it well exhibits the earnestness, pure intention, and rare patriotism of this very eminent individual, so long and deservedly a popular favourite.

As a magistrate he was vigilant and unremitting in his duties, strict, but never exercising an undue severity. He laid it down as a maxim that no one should be suffered to sign his own confession of a crime when brought before himself. He decried the practice as barbarous and tyrannical. He gave an example of this in the case of one Rice, a broker, executed for forgery in 1763.

The recorder of London having given his formal legal opinion that the magistrates had no right, under certain existing circumstances, to hold a man in custody who was accused of murder, Alderman Beckford declared that no murderer should escape justice while he lived, upon such a plea as the recorder's—he would make himself answerable for all the consequences of bringing the criminal to punishment.

He led a life of great activity—his vast wealth never leading him into luxury or idleness in its enjoyment. Though a very singular man,

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his manners somewhat peculiar, yet being always accessible, made him a general favourite. Possessing independence in every sense of the word, he never availed himself of its advantages to lessen his multifarious duties. These must have involved much anxiety and time. He was a great West India planter, a member of Parliament, an alderman of London, a country gentleman and magistrate, an officer of the militia, and a man of refined taste, as his pictures and Fonthill House proved; nor was he without finding time for moderate dissipation. Passionate and proud, the former was rather the result of temperament than inclination; his pride appears to have been a species of reserve rather than pride, with a feeling not inclined to bend so flexibly to the world's idolatries as people in general are prone to do. As to his fortune, no man ever piqued himself less upon his possessions.

Not only were the highest honours paid to his memory in the city, but a committee was appointed to consider the best mode of recording the sense entertained by the citizens of his eminent services. A monument was fixed upon



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for this purpose, and erected in the Guildhall, upon which was inscribed the best part of his reply to the king, on taking up the city address. On the south side of the church of St. George, Botolph Lane, a scroll of iron-work was placed, embellished with the arms of Beckford, viz. per pale g. and az. on a chevron ar. between three martlets o. an eagle displayed of the second. The city regalia and arms, together with the arms of England, were added, and an inscription —"Sacred to the memory of that real patriot the Right Hon. William Beckford, twice Lord Mayor of London, whose incessant and spirited efforts to serve his country hastened his dissolution on the 21st of June, 1770, in the time of his mayoralty and sixty-second year of his age."

Numerous panegyrics were published upon the deceased citizen, some in prose and others in verse. From one poem, published upon the Lord Mayor's death; the following is an extract:—

"Beckford, who to such honours did arise,
Now cold, now breathless, now inactive lies—
Twice London's lord; good senator, adieu!
As Cato steady, and as Lucius true;

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A patriot firm, from motives ever just,
Nor place nor pension could betray his trust;
His soul untainted with the golden bait,
Still scorned the reigning maxims of the state,
His mind with honest meaning richly fraught
Did what he said, and said whate'er he thought.
Where he profest, most stedfast to the end,
A timely succour, and a hearty friend.
Free was his hand, and open was his door
To save the wretched and relieve the poor;
Delayed not justice, did no villain screen;
In sentence merciful, in judgment keen,
Before him fraud and base injustice fled,
And vile extortion hung its greedy head"

The town of Bedford owes a debt of gratitude to Alderman Beckford, for obtaining a regulation of a noble but abused charity, called "Sir William Harpur's charity," which he set on a right footing, solely upon the conviction of its abuse from strangers. Harpur was a native of Bedford, and making a fortune in London, where he had filled the civic chair, he bequeathed in 1566, to the Bedford corporation, a property in land and houses; the former thirteen acres of meadow, in the parish of St. Andrew's, Holborn. The product to portion poor maids, support a grammar school, and educate poor



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children. Encroachments robbed the charity of an acre before 1668. In that year building leases were granted for £97, and in 1684 for £150 on a term of fifty years. Within that term streets, rows, and courts were built, and the estate much augmented.* In 1747 certain persons, said to be in the Duke of Bedford's interest, filed an information against the corporation for new arrangements, and in 1761 obtained the removal of the trust, to a certain extent, out of the hands to which it was bequeathed, and into those of five persons to be joined to them; persons notoriously interested in the return of members under influence—the Duke of Bedford, the Marquis of Tavistock, the Duke of Bedford's steward, and two other persons, notoriously connected with them—so much for impartial Courts of Equity. The objects selected to be benefited, the leases to be granted, the improvements of an estate then bringing in £3,000 per annum, were thus

* Bedford Street, Princes Street, Lower Conduit Street, Queen's Street, Eagle Street, North and East Streets, Bedford Row, Theobald Row, Bedford Court, Boswell Court and others.

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openly placed under illicit influence Accordingly, subservient members of the corporation reckoned with the newly-named trustees, soon began to dispose of the charity to those in the town who were not entitled to it by the donor's will. Election purposes were served, freedom of choosing members could no longer exist, and the independent part of the corporation was neutralized. Some persons wholly unknown to the Lord Mayor, applied to him by letter on the subject, and stated that they had no friends to back them in saving the charity from ill usage and perversion. The Lord Mayor requested to see the parties who had written to him. He told them he was disinclined to interfere with any election interest of the Duke of Bedford, for the people had offered him their interest in the borough. But thus disposed, as regarded the borough, he did not hesitate a moment in regard to the abuse of the charity. He advised a draft for an act of parliament to be sent him, with a petition signed by the majority of the corporation and inhabitants. This was done, and the abuses of the charity under Chancery sanction shewn. The Lord Mayor

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then requested the friends of the bill to request their parliamentary representatives to present it. This, of course, they refused to do. The Lord Mayor then got a friend, indifferent in the question, to present the bill, followed up its introduction by a strong speech in its favour, and carried it through the House of Commons. It met no great opposition in the Lords, and passed, the evidence being so clear as to the perversion of the charity. The efforts of the Lord Mayor showed his determined will to do right; and the picture of the Court of Chancery only added another blot to its escutcheon in the matter of charities. Many were the actions of Lord Mayor Beckford in remedying wrongs in which he had no personal interest; this will suffice to show his disposition in all such cases.

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## CHAPTER III.

### WILLIAM BECKFORD THE YOUNGER—HIS BIRTH AND EDUCATION.

THE late William Beckford of Fonthill Giffard, Wilts, and afterwards of Bath, was born at the former place, September 29th, 1759. His mother was the second wife of the member in parliament for the city for fourteen years preceding, and twice Lord Mayor. She was daughter and coheir of the Hon. George Hamilton, M.P. for Wells. Young Beckford was christened early, the year following his birth, as appears by the following letter from his father to Mr. Pitt, afterwards Earl of Chatham.

"Fonthill, January 7th, 1760.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Your very obliging and much-esteemed favour was duly received. I consider it the

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greatest honor to have such a sponsor to my child. He was made a Christian last night, and Lord Effingham was your proxy. No endeavours of mine shall be wanting (if it please God to spare his life), to instil into his mind principles of religion, honor, and love of country. It is true those are old-fashioned principles; but they are such as you approve and practise.

"Nothing could give me more pleasure than to take your opinion on my present works, and to regulate my future operations by your advice and judgment. But I cannot flatter myself so much as to think it possible to enjoy that comfort, until you have first procured for your country a safe, honorable, and lasting peace.

"I am, my dear Sir,

"Your ever faithful and affectionate,

"Humble servant,

"W. BECKFORD."

At the earliest possible time that impressions of any value in education can be made upon the youthful mind, a preparatory tutor was provided for young Beckford, under whom he remained

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until he had seen eleven summers; at which time, in 1771, Dr. W. Cleaver, afterwards Bishop of St. Asaph, recommended his own cousin, the Rev. Mr. Lettice, to take upon himself the task of his education. The application to Dr. Cleaver to recommend a tutor was made to him by no less a personage than the celebrated Lord Littleton, of Hagley. The instruction of a youth considered heir to one of the first fortunes in the kingdom, which had yet nine or ten years to increase, his father being recently dead, was an undertaking of some consideration. The appointment was three hundred a year; and Lord Littleton represented the pupil as possessing parts much above mediocrity, and indeed of more than ordinary promise, with a disposition peculiarly amiable. Dr. Lettice had previously been employed in educating Miss Gunning, the daughter of one of the English diplomatists resident at the court of Denmark, in which duty he had acquitted himself greatly to the satisfaction of the lady's father. Dr. Lettice was a man of considerable learning and experience, between thirty and forty years old, and the recommendation given of him to Lord Lit-

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tleton obtained him the appointment in the year 1771. His lordship introduced the new tutor to Mrs. Beckford himself, at her house in Wimpole Street, where for the first time the tutor met young Beckford. Lord Littleton came to meet him at dinner. Dr. Lettice described his reception as polite and flattering, but was particularly struck with the elegance as well as vivacity of Lord Littleton's conversation, whom he described in terms much more striking than appear in any of the biographies of that accomplished and learned nobleman.

At this time young Beckford was for the most part a listener. He seldom ventured to speak, while his countenance and behaviour appeared highly prepossessing. The family was about preparing to leave town for Fonthill, its general residence during the summer season.

At Fonthill, as in town, Mrs. Beckford having taken the advice of Lord Littleton as to the arrangements, seems to have acted with great kindness and consideration in all that related to the accommodation of the tutor, with a view both to his own convenience, and that of his pupil, that their studies might not be inter-

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rupted. It is probable that Mrs. Beckford had not forgotten the care and kindness her husband always exhibited to those who were the instructors of youth. She devoted a handsome breakfast-room, and bed chamber, communicating with the library, and a footman, to the tutor's exclusive use, the same that had been once occupied by the elder Beckford. The pupil was lodged near his mother's chamber, but the room devoted to purposes of study was on the ground floor, spacious and airy. The family consisted of Mrs. Beckford, her son, and Miss March, the daughter of Mr. Beckford's first wife, a young lady of considerable personal accomplishments.

The course pursued in following out the studies of the youth may be considered as worthy of attention, and is given from its having had the approval, if it were not actually dictated by Lords Littleton and Chatham, whose friendship for the elder Beckford, while those distinguished men survived, was continued towards his relict and family. The connection of the elder Beckford with the city, it has been stated, was wholly political; his connection with the city having been taken up in order to enable him

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more effectually to support the Earl of Chatham and his friends in their stronghold. Hence after the death of Beckford, that the intimacy and advice of those two great men should have been continued to his family was honourable to both.

The system referred to in the education of young Beckford, was carried out with a ride for half an hour on horseback at seven in the morning. It generally took place in the park, or in the extensive woods and plantations surrounding old Fonthill. On the return of the pupil and his instructor to the house, study commenced with the Latin and Greek grammar. This was followed by the perusal of a chapter in the Bible, on which the tutor read notes, and made remarks. Breakfast then intervened, and shortly afterwards began the routine of classical, French, and English reading, according to a plan which had been proposed by the tutor himself to the nobleman before mentioned, and sanctioned by them. Geography and arithmetic were also introduced in turn. Those studies continued until one o'clock, when horses were brought, and the teacher with his pupil rode for an hour and a half over the Wiltshire Downs, or visited some

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of the neighbouring villages, which are scattered on that extensive waste. On returning they dressed for dinner, which at that time took place at three P.M. There were always visitors in the house, as well as company from the vicinity, at dinner. The pupil then returned with his tutor to his studies for an hour and a half more, afterwards amusing himself with light reading. He then left his tutor in the library, or in the plantations until tea time, continuing with the company until supper was served, at nine o'clock. Conversation, oftentimes music, vocal and instrumental, occupied the evening until eleven, when all retired to rest.

In regard to the character in the world of fashion of the company which visited Fonthill at the time of Mr. Beckford's pupillage, by which it may be naturally supposed the pupil would be in some degree influenced, it may be as well to state that Mrs. Beckford, the mother, and second wife of the elder Beckford, was of the Abercorn branch of the Hamilton family, older, it was said, than the ducal branch, she being the daughter and coheir of the Hon. George Hamilton. The conjectures and discus-

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sions upon this idle relationship, as to which was the earliest branch, and the usual claims to being among the descendants or serfs of William the Bastard, set young Beckford poring over books of heraldry, of which he grew mischievously fond at that early age. His sire's political fame did not satisfy him. He set about tracing his ancestral honors on one side or the other up to John of Gaunt. In this waste of his leisure he was still further led, full of imagination as he was by nature, from the purchase his father made of the venerable ancient castle of Eton-Bray, in Bedfordshire, once the residence of John of Gaunt. This partiality for heraldic study, useless as it was, seemed to obtain a great accendancy in his mind, and his tutor found it necessary to check rather than applaud such a propensity. A sort of pride of family seemed to be springing up in his youthful mind, which it became most politic to repress without appearing to do so; his tutor therefore made light of the grounds on which he pretended to trace his ancestry up to such a source. It was clear that the pupil possessed a very excursive fancy, while his friends looked to his becoming an

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eminent public man, who would have to deal with useful facts, and not lose himself in fiction.

The family at Fonthill was then visited among its relations by the Hon. G. Hamilton, of Paine's Hill, near Cobham, in Surrey, younger brother of Lord Abercorn, whose genius for planting and gardening was at that time pretty generally known. The family of the Earl of Effingham, the earl having married Mr. Beckford's sister, who had become countess-dowager, her second son the existing earl, and her four daughters; also Field-marshal Howard, K.B., the second husband of the Countess. Her third daughter was married to Lord Dorchester, her second to Colonel Carleton, and Elizabeth, the eldest, to Dr. Courtenay, afterwards Bishop of Exeter.

Lord Dorchester, and his nephew, Colonel Carleton, distinguished themselves in that Canadian war in America, which preceded the war of American independence. Among the occasional visitors were the Earl of Chatham and his family, Lord Camden and his accomplished daughter, Lords Littleton, Bathurst, and Thur-

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low, names distinguished in history. The latter at that time was Attorney-General. Of visitors from the neighbourhood of Fonthill, were the old Duke and Duchess of Queensbury; the Bishop of Salisbury; the Earls of Arundel and Pembroke; Mr. Harris of Salisbury, the author; and Messrs. Wyndham, Seymour, and Hoare, the latter one of young Beckford's guardians, and, indeed, most of the respectable individuals in the neighbourhood, for Mr. Beckford had been right hospitable.

Brought up amid such society, young Beckford might naturally be expected to catch the better tone and manners of society, obtain elevated ideas, and make some figure in consequence in the great world, as well as in the world of fashion.*

When about twelve years of age his friends indulged in high expectations of him after he should attain manhood, looking for the consum-

* "Little did I expect," said an individual who waited on the Lord Mayor Beckford about the Bedford petition —"Little did I think," writing in 1816, "that the child I once saw at Eton Bray rolling on the carpet, about a year old, would become the noted Mr. Beckford of Fonthill."

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mation of their wishes regarding him to that which nature designed he should become; a common and partial mistake. Even at that early age his personal figure was advantageous, while his genius and talents were of the most promising character. His vivacity of imagination and natural flow of eloquence were remarkable—his comprehension was lucid, and uncommonly quick. His facility in acquirement as well as his memory were good, and his progress in learning considerably beyond the average; while, amidst all, his application was commendable. His principal fault was, that he grew to be too desultory, notwithstanding he made great way. His temper, though lively, was prone to irritability, yet he was respectful to his instructors, with whom Lord Chatham did not disdain to correspond upon the subject, and to tender advice which was scrupulously followed. A serious regard for religion and pure moral principle, as the solid foundation of all acquirements, was carefully inculcated.

Upon some discontent expressed by Mrs. Beckford respecting the guardians appointed under the will of his father, young Beckford



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was made a ward in Chancery, upon the maternal solicitation; Lord Bathurst being then Chancellor, and taking great interest in his ward.

The tutor, too, seems to have had a worthy sense of the responsibility he incurred, and to have bestowed great pains upon his pupil's education, as was proved in the variety, depth, and extent of his acquirements, to which the world subsequently bore witness. He had to contend against the fondness of maternal attachment, and the conviction that in his pupil's mind there lurked a species of pride, which belonged rather to one conscious of good fortune, than based upon the conviction of having earned it. He was somewhat of a spoiled child, too, as he often declared in after-life he had been.

At twelve years of age he had read a little of Virgil, and began to learn Greek. Under his new tutor he had soon read the whole of the Æneid, of which his excellent memory retained a goodly portion. Horace, Tully's Offices and Orations, Sallust, and the principal Latin writers, were soon mastered; at the same time proceeding with English composition. On Sundays he wrote passages from the Bible, princi-

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pally the historical parts, in his own way, which became exercises, as well as refreshers of his memory afterwards. Civil history became in turn part of his reading, and it was uniformly continued, that of England preceding, and being made a subject of reference. Then followed Rollin's ancient, and Millott's modern history, both in French, accompanied with references, geographical and chronological, impressed on the mind through the *Memoria Technica*. In the Greek, after the Testament, came the Iliad and Odyssey; Xenophon, portions of Plutarch and Thucydides—but the two last were in the French, not the original. The Eton Grammar was used for the Latin and Greek, and Louth's for the English. Declamation was not omitted, and when in English, repeated before company. The speeches of our most distinguished parliamentary speakers were selected for the purpose, with the idea of laying the foundation of that public distinction towards which the hopes of his friends inclined, with a view to his making a figure in future life. At this time it seemed as if his genius inclined him to the fulfilment of their expectations, for he showed marks of



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shining more as an orator, than a man of business. For success in the latter pursuit, his lively and even fiery imagination, of which his friends were needlessly afraid, seemed to point out that success must be inevitable. Despite the tendency of his nature, after three or four years of his pupillage, he had patience sufficient to wade through Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England. With what a different feeling he perused Robertson's Charles V., and Mary, Queen of Scots, he related himself. He revelled in history, and at one time took up natural history with an eagerness which showed how much that study too suited his inclination.

On one occasion, so anxious was Lord Chatham regarding the progress of his friend's son, that he sent an invitation to both tutor and pupil to make himself and Lady Chatham a visit. They accordingly set out for Burton Pynsent in Somersetshire, and were received with great kindness both by Lord and Lady Chatham, and the rest of the family, consisting of three sons and two daughters. Here they remained an entire month. The offspring of the Earl of Chatham were all educated at home,

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under the vigilant and unrelaxing superintendence and active personal assistance of Lord and Lady Chatham. Lord Pitt, the elder son, was designed for the army. William, the second son, was then about fifteen years old; and there was a younger son, educating for the navy. The daughters, one of them Lady Hester, were at that time learning Greek and Latin, under the instruction of Mr. Wilson, of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. William and Hester were foremost in classical acquirements. The latter had so great a desire of learning Greek, and reading Homer with her brother, that she stipulated to apply herself seriously to the study of the higher arithmetic, if she might be permitted at the same time to learn the Greek tongue.

The conversation at Burton Pynsent at this period was always directed to literary subjects, in the style of which Lord Chatham himself set the example. Lady Chatham often bore a part, evidently keeping in view the object of instruction when their children were present. Nothing could be more simple than their mode of life, as well as of the method of instruction pursued. Not the least trace of pride or

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pedantry appeared in action or in conversation. The anxiety of Lord Chatham to render the education of his children as complete as possible was strikingly evident.

Upon one occasion the young people wrote a little dramatic entertainment, which was performed during Mr. Beckford's visit. A number of the residents in the neighbourhood attended, and it went off well. Lord Chatham was fond of out-door amusements, and undertook the management of a little grazing farm, while Lady Chatham occupied herself with a dairy. His lordship too was much occupied at this time with the improvement of the house, garden, and grounds. The estate left the Earl by Sir William Pynsent, out of respect to his public character, was well situated, but not much adorned. Lord Chatham was tall, thin, and stooped a little, owing to the gout to which he was subject. His eyes were uncommonly keen and piercing, his features commanding, and impressed with a peculiar dignity by nature, for his carriage, and, indeed, his entire person, bore marks of that unaffected manner and genuine simplicity which are stamped upon true great-

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ness of soul. Such were Mr. Beckford's impressions regarding him. He was by nature active, but painfully hampered by the gout, from which he was only free at short intervals; he was therefore often wheeled about in a small carriage while superintending his improvements out of doors. In the house he constantly used crutches; and even under this disadvantage, whether bending forwards in moving, whether sitting or standing, he never lost the air of a superior man. In his retirement at Burton, he recalled the portraiture of a Roman Consul or dictator who had retired from public affairs and the command of armies, to his Sabine farm.

Often, when dinner was over, and the ladies had retired, he would converse with great freedom on a variety of topics while taking his wine. He directed his discourse one day upon his young visitor, and the feeling he bore towards his father, for whom he expressed great regard, calling him the late Lord Mayor, as he had died in his second mayoralty. He represented him as an individual of great importance in politics, because of his uncommon popularity in the City of London, and the figure he made

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in the House of Commons; but added, that from the warmth of his character, "he was apt to overshoot himself in council." He then spoke of his son, of the liveliness of character he had noticed in him, his great fluency and command of language, hinting, in the kindest manner, how much his imagination, with the strong attachment he displayed for Oriental reading, alluding particularly to his fondness for Arabic tales, of which he had been informed, might lead him astray from pursuits more worthy of his talents, and from the chaster models in writing and thinking, the legacies of Greece and Rome.

One day it was proposed that young Beckford should repeat a speech of considerable length before the earl, which he had translated from Thucydides, some time before, and rehearsed at Fonthill. He exhibited no want of confidence, had it perfectly by heart, and was by no means wanting in a proper emphasis and action. The whole of Lord Chatham's family were present, and the young speaker was heard with the greatest attention. When he had concluded, Lord Chatham rose from his seat, flung aside his crutch, and embracing the youth,

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evidently much delighted, exclaimed, turning to his son William, "May you, my son, some day, make as brilliant a speaker."

Young Beckford fixed his credit for ever with the great minister, who was at the same moment assidiously instructing his son William in the art of speaking, in which his own abilities had been so pre-eminent.

Young William Pitt at that time did not possess half the genius and imaginative power of young Beckford, but was well instructed, more correct in what he acquired, and more discerning. He was observant, pleasing, and polished in his manners; neat of expression, and somewhat vivacious, but not equal to Beckford in spirit, and much inferior in energy of character.

Upon leaving Burton Pynsent to return home under such encouraging auspices, Lord Chatham took great pains to dissuade him from reading works of Oriental fiction, and the "Arabian Nights" in particular. He obtained the youth's promise to refrain, at least for some time, and it was contrived at Fonthill to remove them out of his sight when his back was turned. This was evidently a thing he regretted, and he ex-

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hibited marks of ill-humour on the occasion. In the mean time, his regular studies proceeded as before, and evidently improved as they went on; but neither this nor the removal out of his sight of works of Eastern fiction, prevented details of Oriental customs in travels and voyages from engaging his attention. His conversation continually adverted to such topics, and worse than all, in the way of mischievous result, was an apparent satisfaction which he exhibited whenever the slavish prostration of subjects of every rank in the East came upon the carpet, with the host of flatterers which surrounded them. This obliquitous tendency of mind nursed a natural pride, of which he had too large a share. This pride was by far the worst feature in his character, because it chimed in very ill with that sincere love of political freedom which had distinguished his father through life, while his friends had a strong desire to see the son eminent on the same political side as that upon which his father had taken his stand.

When in London, which was during the winter, and not as now the summer season, young

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Beckford was not excused from any of his studies; but his sphere of action was much enlarged, and he paid numerous visits, at which his tutor was expected to accompany him, except when he visited a couple of his mother's aunts who lived in strict retirement; Lady Mary Cooley and the Dowager Lady Abercorn. Left alone with these ladies, and uncontrolled by his tutor, he gave way to everything his natural vivacity prompted, and his conversation delighted his relations. His farther improvement in the French language was aided, in town, by a native tutor, who spent two or three evenings in the week with him. To this were added the accomplishments of dancing and fencing, as well as attending the riding school; in all these and similar cases he was attended by a chosen person, to prevent the chance of improper acquaintance being formed. On all upon which he set his mind he succeeded marvellously. In music and design he shewed both invention and enthusiasm, not confining himself to the cold task of scientific execution, but entering into the very marrow of the study for which he had a predilection. He was sometimes too eager to advance beyond

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these steps, which few but those of his own temperament feel inclined to travel.

Invited while yet a youth, in his sixteenth year, to visit the old Duke and Duchess of Queensberry, he made a commendable display there of his oratorical powers, and obtained the warmest praise, even to admiration, extravagantly expressed. The composition he recited was his own, and was so well declaimed that his praises flew back to Fonthill before him; and he was on his arrival requested to repeat the exhibition. His youthful attainments and vivacity in conversation, indeed sometimes too volatile, made him forget to pay strict attention to certain points of etiquette in behaviour, which he well knew the Duchess expected. She was then at the age of fourscore, with a superior understanding and perfect knowledge of the *bienseances* of rank. Having frequently failed at breakfast-time, from the want of doing something which he thought rather rigorous on the part of the Duchess, she desired him to ring the bell, and when the servant entered the room, bade him bring to her the great family Bible. This she opened at the Book of Wisdom, and a pas-

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sage applicable to the occasion, desiring young Beckford to read it aloud. When he had done, her Grace said, "There it was, young man, that I learned *my* manners: I hope you will remember what you have read!"

He received the reproof with great propriety and respect, exactly as it became him to do, and gave those who witnessed it much pleasure. It was true, however, that his satirical humour had been too frequently and too indiscriminately applied, and had now and then broken out, on observing some eccentricities which the Duchess occasionally exhibited, that had been too tempting for him to pass by. The effect of her Grace's reproof from Solomon had the benefit of arresting such sarcastic outbursts, and the youth committed no other transgression of a similar character.

The Duchess of Queensberry was an excellent woman, and had in her youth been deemed a striking beauty. She was tall, with a noble figure, and her face in advanced years was still handsome, scarcely exhibiting a wrinkle; a remarkable circumstance in a woman of her age. She was exceedingly charitable by nature

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and visited herself all the poor people of Amesbury. A man there, used to make warm snug chairs of straw, worked beehive fashion. She suggested to him some considerable improvements as to form, deepening the sides, and canopying them above. She then furnished the poor people's cottages with one or two each, in case of sickness, and kept one constantly in her own drawing room, in which, when seated, she looked like an old Sybil, or Prophetess. The Duke was about her own age, and was a very good-humoured, amiable old man. While young Beckford was staying at Amesbury, the Duchess gave a ball for his entertainment. The greater part of the company came from Salisbury and other places at a distance, and their hospitable hostess gave them beds for the night, and literally filled her hospitable mansion. The consequence was, that no resting place could be found for the musicians, who were obliged to trudge home at night. The circumstance was told the next day to the Duchess, who observed, in her own whimsical manner, "Though I could not accommodate them in the house, they could not go home and say I had not found a 'down'

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bed for them, if they chose to use it." Their way home lay across the Wiltshire downs.

Thus under private tutorship the subject of this memoir remained for about five years, his time divided between the town and country. He was now seventeen years old, and it had become time to consider what further steps should be taken to complete the education of one so favoured by the accident of fortune, both in regard to capacity and the means of enjoyment. Mrs. Beckford had imbibed a prejudice against the two great English universities, and on consulting her friends, it was finally resolved that young Beckford should finish his education at Geneva. Colonel Hamilton, to whom, by his mother's side, he was related, and who had served as a military man in the East Indies, had already taken up his residence at Geneva, with an elderly maiden sister, who superintended his household, for he was unmarried. He was a good-humoured and worthy man, who chancing to pay a visit to Mrs. Beckford, in London, in 1777, consented to receive her son into his house, while he remained in Geneva ; his tutor was to reside close by. At Midsummer in the

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above year young Beckford set out accordingly for Switzerland, where he arrived in the pleasantest season of the year.

At Geneva the young Englishman entered upon a course of instruction in civil law, and attended the lectures of that accomplished civilian, M. Naville, of Geneva. There too, he continued to receive lessons in fencing and riding. It has not been mentioned, because the date cannot be ascertained with precision, that before young Beckford left Fonthill for Geneva, in his seventeenth year, he had written his history of extraordinary painters. In a published conversation with Mr. Redding at Bath, he stated that he was no farther advanced in years when he composed that singular little volume. His first literary work, therefore, must have been completed before he set out for Geneva. The explanation he gave of the origin of this composition was, that he felt prompted to write something of the kind, by remarking the ridiculous memoirs and criticisms on certain Dutch painters of whom he had read in " Vies des Peintres Flamands." In the second place to play off a trick upon his parent's housekeeper

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at Fonthill. This domestic used to get her fee by showing his father's house, and giving accounts of the different painters that executed the pictures. To his great amusement he had heard her bestow most extraordinary names upon the artists who painted them, until he wondered how such nonsense could enter her brain. Fond of satire, he thought the double exposure of the Flemish biographico-pictorial authorship, and the housekeeper's conceit and ignorance, excellent subjects for mystification—the temptation was irresistible—to ridicule such an absurdity, and to gratify his humour against the critics on Dutch art at the same time. Thus blending them together, he determined the housekeeper should have in future a printed guide to help her in her descriptions, and give them an air of greater fidelity. At that early age he had an inclination for a little mischief whenever an absurdity came in his way that deserved the lash; and this tendency grew with his years. His plan succeeded. It suited his humour to listen to descriptions more strange and graphic than ever, when the housekeeper went her rounds with strangers. Before



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a picture of Rubens she would dilate on the skill of Og of Basan, or Watersouchy of Amsterdam, having the most ludicrous effect upon the rustic sight-seers of the vicinity, who, knowing no more of art than herself, seemed to listen to her descriptions with avidity. The most wonderful part in the execution of the work was, the knowledge of art, and of the descriptions of the Dutch biographers which it displayed, and which seemed to require more extended reading, and a longer study of art, than a youth of seventeen could, by any means, be supposed to possess, unless his education had been almost wholly directed to the subject. This, the author himself seems to have explained by saying, that very great pains had been taken with his education; that he was living in the midst of the better works of art, of which his father had made a noble collection, and that he had been always attracted towards similar subjects by his tutor. This accounted for the hits made in the memoirs against mannerism and false taste, both in painting and biography. He was thus sarcastic, harmlessly malicious, deeply observant, and sound in judgment to a degree rarely before witnessed in one so young.

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This work affects to give an account of certain eminent or rather "extraordinary" artists, to adopt the author's words, Aldrovandus Magnus, with his disciples Andrew Guelph and Og of Basan, Sucrewasser of Vienna, Blunderbussiana of Dalmatia, and Watersouchy of Holland. It is necessary the reader should become acquainted with the works thus deservedly exposed to satire, to comprehend their full force. By perusing the Lives of the Flemish Painters this will be effected. The sage discourse of Hemmelinck to persuade that great artist, Aldrovandus Magnus, out of his love for Ann Spindlemans, is excellent. "He accompanied his disciple (the artist in love), tried by sage discourse to set his conduct in its proper light, and told him, with his accustomed gravity, that what was right could not be wrong, and *vice versâ*. He added, that youth was the season of folly, and that passion was like an unbridled horse, a torrent without a dyke, or a candle with a thief in it, and ended by comparing Ann Spindlemans herself to a vinegar bottle, who would deluge the salad of matrimony with much more vinegar than oil." After two long hours in this highly figurative style, observing



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his disciple's eyes nearly closed, he gave another fillip to his imagination, and attempted to excite his attention by more splendid ideas. He represented to him what golden advantages would spring from his residence at Prague, what honours, what emoluments; and next he brought to view Duke Podebrac, with great solemnity appointing him his painter, and holding forth chains and medals decorated with costly gems, as the reward of his labours. These representations in a little time effaced Ann Spindlemans from his memory. Painters at all times are fond of toadying people of title. He goes at once to the Duke, meets an honourable reception; begins his "Moses in the Burning Bush" in such a masterly manner, that the young princess Ferdinanda Joanna Maria cries, "Mamma, la! I won't touch that bramble bush, for fear I should burn my fingers." This circumstance obtained great applause for her serene highness and her judgment in art; the Court was in raptures, and the painter obtained an unparalleled reputation in the sphere of what philosophers would call "Dutch greatness." Thus Aldrovandus Magnus rose to fame and fortune.

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Disciples, numberless, followed him, but two in an especial manner became renowned in the annals of painting, through his instructions. These two were Andrew Guelph and Og of Basan, ever after styled the "Disciples of Aldrovandus Magnus." The latter died for grief in consequence of the destruction of all the canvass in the district by fire, he having bought the whole of it for labours contemplated to be immortal. He died like Alexander, for want of superficies over which to extend his renown; Professor Clod Lumpewitz nightly insisting that the Macedonian artist was scandalized by those who accused him of dying of the bottle.

Of the foregoing disciples of the mighty artist, Aldrovandus Magnus, Og born in an obscure village in the wilds of Pomerania, the son of a farmer, one Geoffrey Simons, or Sikimonds, was early noticed by Prince Henry Suckingbottle, and Velde-Marshal Swappingback. Some supposed that his earthly fathers were dubious, and might have been illustrious, as those two grandees took much notice of his mother, and stood his godfathers by proxy, 1519, February 3rd, when he was christened Og of Basan. Guelph and

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Og were boyish friends, grew up together, and displayed a similar genius. To quote the author:

"Their employments frequently called them into the fields, and it was in mutually delighting to observe nature, that they first imbibed the idea of imitating her productions. Seldom did the sun set before they had engraven upon the rocks the resemblances of some of the shrubs that grew from the fissures, or the likeness of several of the goats that came to drink at a spring beneath. The desire of excelling each other produced many surprising efforts of genius, and it happened that after they had amused themselves about five years in covering the neighbouring rocks with their sculptures, that Og's mother unfortunately lost a sheep on which she had placed her affections. Searching for her lost favourite, she climbed the rocks to which her son and his friend were accustomed to resort. The first object that struck her eyes, was the portrait of the animal for which she was looking, sketched out upon stone. When she returned home she could not help relating what she had seen to a Jew who frequented her house, and who had been educated a painter."

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On the foregoing incident depended the fortunes of these illustrious artists; the Jew undertook to cultivate their talents, and succeeded, no doubt turning them to his own account on the sly. They travelled to Prague in the depth of winter, the Jew having died at a critical moment for aiding their future prospects, and having sold their master's pictures as well as their own for a large sum. How they travelled over the Tyrol with mules, sketching all the way, Og's genius delighted with the glories and grandeur he witnessed on the mountains, and Guelph in the moonlight of the vales by which he pinched his guitar. One of his pictures in the Dusseldorf collection was a moonlight scene, with peasants in fine attitudes, a beautiful haze, aërial perspective, and masterly tints. Many connoisseurs gave the preference to that over any other kind they had ever seen. Andrew Guelph was a great botanist, and while too many later painters only do one thing indifferently, Guelph had numerous irons in the fire, thus exhibiting the extensive grasp of his genius. Og ascended the mountains to contemplate their sublimity, suffered his beard to grow, a mark in those days of the unsophisticated

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artist, not as now, displaying his genius by baring his throat and neck with a thrown-back collar. He exhibited his drawings to his friends, discoursed of forests, of tints, of harmonies in colour, and how the mountains had taught him to compose lines, which if not poetry, were verses. The two friends then passed into Italy, made a noise among the *conoscenti* at Venice, where they found the great painters Soorcrout and Sucrewasser of Vienna. These last, by a meanness too remarkable in some clever artists, depreciated the studies of Guelph and Og, censured the varnish peculiar to Aldrovandus, condemned oils in general, and recommended white of eggs. They called the great Aldrovandus a plagiarist, who copied nature in place of the antique: told them they were nothing because they had not yet been at Rome, and seen Raphael; and worse than all, they had actually been born in Flanders! Og, full of temper and ardent of imagination, insisted that an assembly of the *conoscenti* should be convoked, a day appointed, and a cassino chosen for the rendezvous of the assembly. Andrew Guelph prepared his moonlight for the occasion, and Og of Basan a

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wilderness, in which he introduced the Temptation of our Saviour. His rivals brought pieces which they esteemed capital. Signor Andrea Boccadolce, president of the society, having taken the chair, and the pictures being placed in a row before him, silence was proclaimed, and Og of Basan commanded to advance and vindicate the use his master, Aldrovandus Magnus, had made of nut oil, preferable to white of egg, defended by Sucrewasser and Soorcrout.

Og of Basan obeyed, and with a modest assurance stepped into the middle of the assembly, hemmed three times, cast a terrible eye upon his antagonists, bowed to the president, and began in the following terms:—

"Had I even a third part of my master's merit, I should not without fear hazard my opinion before so respectable an assembly, distinguished by their profession, and still more by that rare knowledge and that taste in art which they have displayed on so many preceding occasions. Imagine not, illustrious Signors! I am ignorant of my rivals' merit. Their performances have doubtless met with no more than deserved applause; and had the hens of

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your sacred republic ceased depositing their eggs, you could then have unanimously allowed the beauty evident in every stroke—for they might have been visible—but I confess the splendour of their incomparable varnish has bereft me of eyes to examine what I doubt not merits the most exact attention."

Here Soorcrout bit his lip, and Sucrewasser scratched his elbow; Signor Boccadolce whistled gently, and the *conoscenti* looked at one another as if they had never thought of this before. Og proceeded:—

"Aldrovandus, whom the Duke of Bohemia regretted to his last moments; Aldrovandus, the pupil of Hemmelinck; Aldrovandus, who obtained the title of Magnus, anointed his pictures with nut oil. Show me a more illustrious example, and I will follow it. Ah! if we could recal this great man from the tomb in which I saw him interred, how ably would he defend the cause of nut oil. Had my feeble voice but half the unction of his tongue, I should confound you partizans of white of egg; I should drive you to despair. You would hide yourselves from this assembly. You would make an omelet

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of your eggs, and bury them in your own entrails."

This was greatly applauded by the *conoscenti*, and Signor Boccadolce pronounced that no varnish but nut oil could smooth a wilderness, or give so amiable a polish to the devil's horns.

Andrew Guelph then uncovered his moonlight. The spectators were astonished, and no other varnish but nut oil was approved. Applauses were universal. Soorcrout and Sucrewasser stole away from Venice. The Pococurante family commanded a whole gallery of the works of the two artists. Og preceded Guelph to Rome, leaving his friend to finish the Pococurante gallery, and rejoin him. How he went to Tivoli, fell in love and jilted the lady, who threw herself into the river beneath the Sybil's Temple; how graciously he was received by Cardinal Grossocavallo, who placed him in his palace and presented him to the pope, who commanded the altar pieces from him on subjects of great renown; one, the pious St. Denis bearing his own decapitated head, intended as a present for the King of France; the other, the Holy St. Anthony preaching to the fishes, designed as a

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present to Frederick the Simple, King of Naples, in both which works Og appeared to excel himself. In the present to the French king, the astonishment of the head at finding itself off its own shoulders, was admirably expressed, and the whole fully as natural as that of any other man whoever bore such a burthen. In the other picture the countenances of the fishes expressed profound piety and veneration: some thought the countenances of the fish were so pious that they bore a resemblance to those of the conclave; but that was deemed untrue, because the painter had no pique against them. After this he began to reflect and moralize on the mortality of earthly things, disserted upon the doctrine of a plurality of worlds, and became overpowered with melancholy on seeing a broken column. Conscience now troubled him. He remembered the girl that died for his love. The following will afford a specimen of the writer in a more serious mood at the age of seventeen.

"The recollection of Tivoli now stole insensibly into his mind. He grew troubled, and reproached himself a thousand times with having deserted one who had sacrificed all for him.

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Though he was ignorant of her sad fate, the delicacy of her sensations recurred to his memory with innumerable circumstances, which revived all his former tenderness, and many dreadful suspicions haunted his fancy. If he slept his dreams represented her in the well-known woods, wailing as in anguish, or on the distant shore of rapid torrents beckoning him to console her in vain, for the instant he attempted to advance, tempests arose, and whirlwinds of fire snatched her screaming from his sight. Often he imagined himself reclining by her side in meads of flowers, under a sky of the purest azure, and suddenly she would become ghastly pale, and frowning on him, drive him to a flood that rolled its black waves over terrifying precipices, and dashing into its current, drag him after her, and then he would wake in horror, crying 'I drown! I drown!' Indeed he seems to have been selected as an example of divine vengeance. Alone in this great capital, without a friend to administer consolation, or sustain his sinking spirits, he returned to Tivoli, fully resolved to make every reparation to her who had placed such unmerited confidence in his perjured breast. But ye

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who have any sensibility, figure to yourselves the poignancy of his grief when the first object he beheld was a young man, the brother of her he had loved, and who had taken the monastic habit, shuddering at his sight, and exclaiming, 'Avaunt, wretch! My sister plunged into that torrent for thee—for thee she is lost for ever—and scarce three days did my mother survive her. Thou too shouldst join them, or I would die a thousand deaths, did not my order forbid me to vindicate my wrongs. 'Tis to my future hopes thou owest thy safety; but be gone, lest I break my vow, and sacrifice thee to my revenge.'"

Cowardice generally accompanies guilt; Og, terrified at the resolute aspect of the young man, and appalled by the lively sense of his wrongs, retired without making any reply, and remounting his horse, which he had led when he ascended the steeps of Tivoli, galloped away with astonishing swiftness, without determining where he should direct his route. In every passing wind he fancied he heard voices upbraiding him with his crimes; and cries denouncing them seemed to issue from every thicket he left be-

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hind. "At length, harassed by continual fears, he stopped, towards the close of the evening, near the sepulchre of Cecilia Metella, and throwing himself from his wearied horse, which he left carelessly to drink at a fountain, sought the interior of the structure. Here, beneath a solitary pine, he folded his arms, and remained till night in silence, the image of despair. The screeches of noxious birds, which frequented the edifice, roused him from his trance. He started up, and quitted the ruin with terror, as if he had been personally guilty of murder, and without looking for his horse, turned his steps towards a garden he just distinguished in the twilight. As he had taken no sustenance the whole day, some branches loaded with fruit, that hung over the wall, offered themselves opportunely to allay his hunger. Whilst he was gathering them the moon arose, and discovered faintly the desolate scene around. There a pillar yet erect, with an humble shed beneath, whose roof leaned over its base. Here a tract of uncultivated ground strewed with fragments of superb edifices, long since laid low. There the remains of fountains and aqueducts, whose

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hollow arches still echoed the murmurs of rivulets which forced their feeble course with difficulty through heaps of mouldering marble, and roots of fantastic laurels. Rome lay extended beyond, diversified by its domes and spires, and marked by a dim haze proceeding from the light of its palaces. The wanderer listened to the confused sounds of music, of revelry, and triumph, which arose from the numerous habitations, but it was with disgust. He loathed every thing that was allied to joy, and abhorred all that bespoke festivity. He remained uneasy till the uproar ceased, and, when the surrounding regions were hushed in the most profound tranquillity, began his complaints. He was on the very point of depriving himself of existence, and walked to and fro, agitated by all the violent emotions of despair. Half the night was spent in vain lamentations, and the gray twilight was just beginning to be visible, when, wearied with inquietude, he sunk down upon the ground, and fell into a slumber in which the scene hovered before his fancy. A fictitious city was stretched out before him, enlightened by a fictitious moon. The shade of her he had loved skimmed along

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a colonnade, which cast its shadows on the plain, and then stood leaning on the lonely pillar, uttered a feeble groan, and glided by his side. Her wet garments, clinging round her delicate shape, her swollen eyes and drooping hands announced a melancholy fate. She seemed to say, 'Why do my affections still linger on thee beyond the tomb! Why doth my pale bosom still cherish its wonted fires! How comes it that I do not appear riding on a sulphureous cloud, shaking a torch in my hand, and screaming out perjury! No, my gentle nature forbids me to injure thee. But mark! Quit yonder fatal city; seek the islands of the south, and mayst thou expiate thy crime!' The form then shed some visionary tears, and seemed to mingle with the mists of the morning. Og, awakened by the sun-beams, recollected his dream, and without even taking leave of the Cardinal Grossocavallo, in whose care he had deposited a coffer containing the reward of his pencil, heedlessly took the road to Naples, resolving to pass into Sicily, and end his days in that island."

No sooner said than done. At Rome he



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entered a church, where he beheld his picture of Anthony preaching to the fishes, a picture receiving universal praise. One praised the saint's position, another the amiable physiognomy of a huge thunny, foremost of the piscatory auditory; and a third, a wag, wished it could be transferred to his own table. The officiating priest was in rapture when he found the painter of that blessed picture, and all were loud in his praises. Count Zigaggi, the minister, welcomed him in the king's name to Naples, assuring him of royal protection. In the meanwhile his friend Guelph went through various but less imaginative adventures, the satire being well kept up, and the "keeping," admirable. Guelph and Og both painted pictures for Count Zigaggi. His majesty presented him a diamond ring, and he had for a disciple a youth called Benboaro Benbacaio, who had studied under Julio Romano. At length he set off for Sicily, to abandon the deceitful world. Here he travelled among the fine scenery, and, while Guelph married a rich Sicilian girl, Og wandered about the island, and at length disappeared. Guelph survived only three years. The former artist was suspected

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of having flung himself into the burning crater of Ætna, owing to his love-melancholy. Guelph's family, or descendants of it, are still traceable in Sicily. He left a son, a clever artist. The father is called by amateurs, to designate his works, "Old Andrew Guelph."

In treating of Sucrewasser of Vienna, before spoken about as having been beaten by Og and Guelph at Venice, the author informs us that his character and life differed wholly from those before described. The Sucrewassers were grocers at Vienna for many generations. The son had none of the fervor of genius—none of the graces of the imagination. He was a most frugal, consistent, regular character, who desired to make money by art, as modern painters do, and as he could do in his father's shop. Indeed at six years he put on the family apron, and at twelve was promoted to the desk, from which he was bound an apprentice to a herald painter, and learned at last the art of giving a due appearance of strength to a lion's paw, and a due court flourish to a dragon's tail. He was placed under a certain Italian artist, Signor Insignificanti, who, being rich, had a reputation



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as an artist. Here he remained three years, just at the expiration of which term he and his master painted a favourite lap-dog belonging to the Princess Dolgarouki. He quarrelled with his master as to how the pug was to be placed, whether on a blue or red velvet cushion. He then went to Venice, painted the four Seasons, and three Graces, and sometimes a few blind Cupids, with a lean Fury to set them off. He lived in peace, until he became acquainted with Soorcrout, and got into the quarrel about the white of egg and oil. Soorcrout went off to England from Venice, while Sucrewasser remained in the environs of Venice till the storm blew over. He painted a Salome, imitated from Titian, and sold it in England, it is presumed, as a genuine piece.

Blunderbussiana was an artist who followed a band of robbers, and studied from nature—a sort of Salvator Rosa. He was a great dissector: to acquire a mastership of the muscles, having plenty of subjects for practice from among the characters handled and rendered manageable in the act of pillage by knife or stiletto — he used to slice off the muscles

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from legs and arms as he walked in the fields, in order to perfect his anatomical studies.

But perhaps the most characteristic and best sketched after his school, is Watersouchy, of Amsterdam, born in the Kalverstraat, opposite the hotel of Etanshasts, next door to the Blue Lion. His family had been candle-makers in Amsterdam for a long period, and had risen by slow gradations from making farthing starvelings to aristocratic wax dealing. Ten whole eights were consumed at his birth, an expense his frugal Dutch friends had never before incurred at feast or funeral. His genius was kindled by some designs for making Brussels point: he imitated them, and his mother had them glazed. Artists in the pictorial way, these biographers tell us, uniformly exhibit such precocious marks of genius. A noble artist, named Van Cuyck de Mierhop, most illustrious in regard to his ancestry, having a marvellous genius for painting eatables, old women, and such like furniture of still life, was pleased with young Watersouchy. He himself visited the boy's father from pure love of art. He often met well-furrowed old women there, saw the plumpest

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soles on the table, as well as legs of beef for study, and all manner of joints, in delineating which his taste for nature in any shape led him to excel. The subjects of his pencil harmonizing with his palate, he became doubly inspired. It was under such a faithful copier of the social natural, that the youth of this promising artist was passed. When he could almost rival his master, the last in the most disinterested manner recommended he should be placed under the patronage of Gerard Dow, so renowned for the exquisite finish of his pictures. Old Watersouchy asked his wife's opinion on the matter, and whether painting was a genteel profession for their son—whether it was respectable? Mierhop, who was by, and heard the conversation, smiled with disdain. The lady replied it was one of the liberal arts, and Watersouchy became the pupil of Dow. Never were colours so nicely ground and kept as those of Dow. The shape of his phials for oils and varnishes was stamped with the elegant taste of Holland, as to form. Dow made him open his cabinet and studio with excessive caution when he entered either of them, and he was to sit

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motionless for some time before beginning to work, lest any particle of dust should fall upon his canvass. The pupil refined upon his master's precautions in everything; a mark of his superior genius. He learned Latin, and was taught the violin by a barber who sat as a model to Dow.

The author then goes on to describe the improvement of the artist in the peculiar excellencies of the Dutch school.

"To describe exactly," he wrote, "the masterly group of the gossips, the demureness of the maiden aunts, the puling infant in the arms of its nurse, the plaits of its swaddling clothes, the gloss of its ribbons, the fringe of the table-cloth, and the effect of light and shade on a salver adorned with custard cups and jelly glasses, would require at least fifty pages. In this space, perhaps, these details might be included; but to convey a due idea of that preciseness, that air of decorum, which was spread over the whole picture, surpasses the power of words."

Again, "He rose to the highest place in the esteem of that incomparable artist (Dow), who,

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after eight years had elapsed, suffered him to groupe without assistance. An arm chair of the richest velvet and a Turkey carpet were the first compositions of which he claimed the exclusive honour. The exquisite drawing of these pieces was not less observable than the softness of their tints, and the absolute nature of their colouring. Every man wished to sit down on the one, and every dog to repose in the other."

How he lost his father and shared the funeral feast, and set off afterwards with strong recommendations to Antwerp, "for the advance of his reputation." How he was introduced there to M. Baise-la-main, the great banker, to whom everybody pointed, a "gentleman in a modest peruque, blue coat with gold frogs, and black velvet breeches." How well the artist was received, caressed, flattered, is all detailed. "M. Baise-la-main leading the obsequious Watersouchy through several large halls and long passages, till they entered a rich apartment, where a circle of company, very splendidly attired, rose up to receive them. Half an hour was spent in presenting the artist to every individual. At length a pause in the ceremony

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ensued, and then the congratulations with which he had been first received, were begun anew with redoubled ardour. Watersouchy, finding himself surrounded by so many solemn ruffs, and consequential farthingales, was penetrated with the sublimity of etiquette, and thought himself in the very Athens of politeness. This service of rites and ceremonies, with which strangers in those times were ushered into Antwerp, being hardly ended, the company began at length to relax into some degree of familiarity."

The painter next visited the great banker's cabinet. He had been introduced to Mieris and Sibylla Marian, noted artists of the day, who carried minuteness and delicacy of touch to the highest point of perfection. These artists engrossed a superlatively fine gilded corner of the banker's apartment, having a chimney-piece encrusted with fine China porcelain. The board that closed up the chimney in fine weather, was a capital Pietâ by Julio Romano, which struck Watersouchy as a complete eyesore in art—such limbs! Being conscious they were out of his reach, he condemned them as out of nature.

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His admiration was an apothecary's shop by Mieris, and a Cupid holding a garland of flowers, by Marian. This lady was in high esteem with him, from her nicety of touch. She was full of propriety, on which account she married Jean Gruff, of Nuremberg, that she might study the nude in a modest way. He condemned Polemberg for his woody landscapes, the appearance of much happiness, the antique temples, the rills, and bathing nymphs he executed, though he liked the minuteness, while he condemned the choice of his subject. M. Baise-la-main, while he loved Polemberg, thought his buildings and scenes confused and unintelligible, and not at all equal to those comfortable habitations which Mieris painted with such minute accuracy. Mieris, then present, bowed, and Watersouchy, encouraged, censured a scene where Polemberg had introduced a group of ruins—why not have substituted the great church at Antwerp in perfection, in place of those Roman lumps of confusion and decay? Instead of garden flowers of all colours, his foregrounds were covered with all manner of woods, and as much time was spent upon finishing a dock-leaf as if it had been a

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most estimable carnation. Then naked figures, a Cupid or two, might not be amiss, but an artist lost all his opportunities by omitting full dress, the glory of the pencil, for earrings and bracelets displayed the perfection of an artist's touch. All the science was united in a carpet, grouping, colouring, shading, effect, everything. Polemberg was ruined by going to Italy, and quitting Elsheimer for the caprices of Raphael.

Supper was served in a large hall, where hung the decollation of Holophernes by Mabuse, and a brawn's head by Mierhop. One guest was the Burgomaster Van Gulph, with a glowing nose and fair skin, from whose band of the finest lace the artist could scarcely take off his eyes. These compliments passed without end, and Watersouchy set to work in Antwerp. First, he arranged his palette, pencils, and tools with all the precision of Gerard Dow. He was six weeks grinding his colours, composing his own peculiar varnish, and preparing his canvass. In a fortnight more he had decided upon a subject, an interior perspective of M. Baise-la-main's counting-house, at the moment when heaps of gold glittered on the counter, and citizens were

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depositing their plate and jewels. The sunshine displayed every legend on the coin, and in three months the picture was some way advanced. The great artist meanwhile employed his leisure in practising jigs and minuets on the violin, and wrote the first chapter of Genesis on a watch-paper, adorned with a miniature of Adam and Eve, so exquisitely small, and yet so well finished that every ligament in their fig-leaves was visible. The ladies were delighted with the artist. M. Baise-la-main settled a pension upon him, merely to have the refusal of his labours. His works were published at such an extravagant price, and so eagerly sought by the ever-discerning public, that he refused to sketch a slipper or design an ear-ring under two hundred florins. He became artistically vain and confident. In a picture of the Burgomaster Van Gulph he exhausted minuteness. He baffled Mieris, numbering even the hairs in his sister's eyelashes; and the carbuncle at the end of his nose, which had baffled Mieris, he rendered in full splendour. He resided with its owner while thus employed, and the admiration he received made Watersouchy mentally exclaim—"You are

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worthy to possess me!" He painted his new patron's wife, not in still life, but busy watering a capsicum. Her ruffle, though admirable, was nothing to her hands and arms. Gerard Dow had bestowed five days' work on those parts of the lady's person. Watersouchy spent a month in giving the fingers only the touches of perfection. Each finger had its ring so tinted, as at first sight almost to deceive a clever jeweller.

This was the artist's last great work. His health failed, but he bore up, and became cheerful at times in the company of a few old ladies. He took cordials, became fond of news about tulips, and painted little pieces for his early comforters, such as a dormouse, or a cheese with mites. His old patrons saw his genius was extinguishing, and his difficulty of breathing increasing.

Mr. Beckford concluded the life of Watersouchy, and his own volume, in the following words:—

"'I have been troubled with an asthma for some time,' said the artist (Watersouchy), in a faint voice.

"'So I perceive,' said M. Baise-la-main. "More of this interesting conversation has not

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been communicated to me, and I find an interval of three months in his memoirs, marked by no other occurrence than his painting a flea. After this last effort of his genius, his sight grew dim, his oppression increased, he almost shrunk away to nothing, and in a few weeks dropped into his grave."

The knowledge displayed of the Dutch school of art, and the progress of an artist of that nation from the parental dwelling to the height of his fame, might have been acquired from the "Vies des Peintres Flamands;" but the satire, the application of the lessons, the predispositions of artists, and modes of thinking common to some, and the keen, sly blows at amateurs, those bursts of irrational admiration and that dying off which the crowd exhibits at any nine days' wonder, it does not comprehend—these are from the author alone, and amidst grotesque writing show deep reflection. At seventeen, such a result is still less common than a theoretical insight into art. He looks into human motive, begetting a contempt carried perhaps too far for things that must be taken as we find them, or not at all. But they look us full in the face

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with their truth, and present us, above all, with the delicate cutting moral at the close of the life of the painter, broken down with asthma; the "so I see," contrasted with the pompous entertainment given him by the Antwerp banker. Here is displayed a history of artistic patronage, and that in a very few words, altogether realizing the common lesson of Solomon upon human vanity, continually repeated by the writer in conversation in his lifetime, while apparently contradicting it by action in the eyes of the world. This, though a little, is a most extraordinary work to those who, with educated minds and some reading in art, are enabled to see the author's aim, and be amused, not with the depth of his matter, but the keenness and truthfulness of his satire.

The date of the composition of this volume has been already noted in relation to Mr. Beckford's life. He was at Geneva in his seventeenth year—it should have been, it is most probable, his eighteenth.* Thither we must return.

* In conversation with Mr. Redding at Bath, Mr. Beckford stated his seventeenth year. He returned from Geneva, after a residence with his tutor there of about a year and a half, in November, 1778.

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## CHAPTER IV.

STUDIES AT GENEVA—SOCIETY THERE—SAUSSURE—BOSSUET—HUBER—THE CHARTREUSE—VOLTAIRE—COUNTRY TOUR—VISIT TO THE CONTINENT—HOLLAND.

HERE he had those pleasures and advantages which fortune alone can confer in the way of society and relaxation. Thus his writings are interesting in a particular manner for the insight they afford in many places to the manners and characters of perished men and things, to a state of society to which the present bears little resemblance, and to assist in the elucidation of some points that it may be interesting to clear up.

Young Beckford's hours of relaxation were spent in riding into Geneva, when not resident in the town, from Chênes, three miles off; Colonel Hamilton having a country house there.

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He continued his fencing and riding lessons when in Geneva. There were generally one or two evenings in the week in which a small circle of persons met for social converse, when tea was served up, with wine and fruit. Such a meeting was called a "Gouté." One of those societies, for there were two, consisted wholly of clergymen, who met at each other's houses on Sundays, after the duties of the day were over.* Mr. Beckford's tutor was duly initiated there; there were two or three professors of divinity, and the public librarian, among the members. Theological subjects, of course, in the capital of Calvin, were then discussed. The other "gouté" was open both to the clergy and laity; the venerable Syndic, the first magistrate of the republic, was a member here. The subjects discussed were connected with philosophy, belles-lettres, politics and discoveries. The fame of Mr. Beckford's father made the members desirous of knowing the son. In general, however, he

* This, in the Calvinistic capital, so rigid in creed, bears out the fact of Calvin himself having played at bowls on Sunday evenings at Geneva, to show how joyous Sunday was kept by the early Christians.



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was preferably engaged in youthful parties and visitings, society suiting better his own age. There was one of these younger parties consisting of the youth of both sexes, in which they set going what was called a dramatic "proverbe," designed to illustrate some moral maxim. Very few of the English visited any of the native parties, but herded together; a thing not regretted upon Mr. Beckford's account, as the object of his visit was to become acquainted with the more intellectual and respectable native inhabitants of the city, not to idle among the more unintellectual of his countrymen; and in this he succeeded. Saussure was among the acquaintance of Mr. Beckford, the same individual who ascended Mont Blanc, explored the glaciers of the Alps and Mont Rosa, and died in 1799. He was a man of large property, celebrated for his philosophical researches. He had a country house on the banks of the lake, where he was visited by young Beckford. M. Bonnet, the great naturalist, so well known throughout the world by his scientific and philosophical works, was among young Beckford's friends. There, too, he was repeatedly and most hospitably en-

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tertained at a villa on the Leman. Bonnet, like Mr. Beckford, began to write at the early age of eighteen, when he began with his correspondence on Reaumur.

Among other individuals with whom Mr. Beckford contracted a friendship here, was the celebrated Huber, a man of fortune and original genius, much humour, and considerable wit. His manners were exceedingly agreeable. Though fifty years of age, Mr. Beckford was more attached to this gentleman than to any other in Switzerland, feeling always perfectly at ease in his society. His lady, two sons, and a daughter, composed his interesting family, and they inhabited a villa on the eastern shore of the lake. M. Huber was fond of falconry, upon which he had written an essay. He had an amusing talent of cutting out caricature figures in pasteboard with astonishing rapidity and success. He was a very good portrait painter, played on the violin, and had closely studied two or three branches of natural history, besides possessing much miscellaneous information. His eldest son, blind, married a lovely woman, gentle in manners, and adroit in pleasing her husband. She was his



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reader, and his observer in acquiring his knowledge of the habits of bees. He edited the work of his father on the subject which became an authority, entitled "Nouvelles Observations sur les Abeilles." The younger son was the favourite of young Beckford, being, like himself, full of imagination. He studied painting some time at Rome. It was, therefore, no wonder that Switzerland, with its charming scenery, so much attracted the affection of its English visitor.

While at Geneva, young Beckford, not at all inclined towards abstract science, went through Locke on the Conduct of the Mind. It was little other than a barren subject to him, and in consequence, it was managed he should be invited by the Baron Prangin to his chateau near Nyon, to hear lessons on experimental physics by M. D'Epinasse, who had given them to George III. in his minority. The lectures resided with the baron, retired from the cares of the world. Mr. Beckford heard the lectures, and was hospitably entertained, but it is not probable they were his favourite themes.

In 1778, young Beckford and his tutor visited the Grande Chartreuse, the head of the Houses

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of the Order of Chartreuse, in the deepest recesses of the mountains of Dauphiny. The order was nearly as severe as that of La Trappe. The brethren were allowed to converse together once a week, with freedom to ramble on the same day through the wild forests around. Young Beckford was much struck with the grandeur of the scenery, the dashing torrents, and towering rocks which overhung the buildings. The entertainment afforded was hospitable both to visitor and attendant. A large parlour, with cells communicating, answered for bed-chambers. There were vast ranges of buildings, offices, cells, a chapel, library, and guides in a coadjutor and secretary. These last were very pleasant persons, exceedingly kind and civil. Young Beckford, while delighted with the grandeur of the scenery, found the awful solitude touch his spirit. An excellent entertainment of milk, vegetables, and fish was served up, the fare being always meagre, but dressed in such a variety of ways as to be extremely palatable. Three days thus passed away. One morning, being wet, Mr. Beckford got hold of the works of St. Bruno, in folio and in Latin. Of these and the monastery he wrote an ad-

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mirable account. In that narration he thus described the works of St. Bruno from this perusal of them:—

"After we had breakfasted by the light of our fire—the casements admitted but a very feeble gleam—I sat down to the works of St. Bruno, of all medleys the strangest. Allegories without end; a theologico-natural history of birds, beasts, and fishes; several chapters on Paradise; the delights of solitude; the glory of Solomon's temple; the new Jerusalem, and numerous other wonderful subjects, full of enthusiasm and superstition.

"St. Bruno was certainly a mighty genius. I admire the motives which drew him to this desert; but before we come to that part of the story, you would like to know what preceded it.

"My saint, for Bruno has with me succeeded Thomas of Canterbury, was of noble descent, and possessed of considerable wealth. He was not less remarkable for the qualities of his mind, and his talents gained him the degree of 'Master of the Sciences' in the University of Rheims; he contracted a friendship with Odo, afterwards Pope Urban the Second. Being always poetical,

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singular, and visionary, he soon grew disgusted with the world, and began early in life to sigh after retirement. His residence was at Grenoble, where he was invited by Hugo, its bishop, who determined him to choose the monastic state.

"This venerable prelate imparted to him a vision, in which he seemed to behold the desert and mountain beyond his city, visible in the dead of night, by the streaming of seven lucid stars that hung distinctly over them.

"Whilst he was ardently gazing at this wonder, a still voice was heard declaring it the future abode of Bruno, by him to be consecrated as a retirement for holy men desirous of holding converse with their God.

"Here it was that St. Bruno, in 1084, by the advice of Hugo, founded the convent, where he finished his days in 1101."

Strangers being desired to write their names in the album of the monastery, with anything they chose to add regarding the place and their reception, the visitors left the following lines, the larger portion being those of the tutor, Dr. Lettice, the pupil being, perhaps, not at the moment duly inspired:—

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"To orisons the midnight bell
Had toll'd each silent inmate from his cell:
The hour was come, to muse or pray,
Or work mysterious rites that shun the day.
My steps some whispering influence led,
Up to the pine-clad mountain's gloomy head:
Hollow and deep the gust did blow,
And torrents dash into the vales below:
At length the toilsome height attained,
Quick fled the morn, and sudden stillness reigned!
As fearful turned my searching eye,
Glanced near a shadowy form, and fleeted by!
Anon before me, full it stood,
A saintly figure, pale, in pensive mood.
Damp horror thrilled me till it spoke,
And accents faint the charm-bound silence broke:—
'Lone traveller, ere this region near,
Say, did not whisperings strange arrest thine ear?
My summons 'twas, to bid thee come,
Where sole the friend of nature loves to roam.
Ages long past this drear abode
To solitude I sanctified and God.
'Twas here by love of wisdom brought,
Her truest lore, self-knowledge, first I sought;
Devoted here my worldly wealth,
To win my chosen sons immortal health.
Midst these dim woods, and mountains steep,
Mid the wild horrors of yon desert deep,
Mid yawning caverns, watery dells,
Mid long sequestered aisles and peaceful cells,
No passions fell distract the mind,
To nature, silence, and herself consigned.

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In these still mansions who shall bide,
'Tis mine with heaven's appointment to decide.
But hither I invite not all,
Some want the will to come, and more the call.
But all, mark well my parting voice,
Led or by chance, necessity, or choice,—
Oh! with our genius dread to sport—
Sage lessons here may learn of high import.
Know silence is the nurse of truth—
Know temperance long retards the flight of youth.
Learn hence how penitence and prayer
Man's fallen race for happier worlds prepare—
Learn mild demeanor, void of art;
And bear amid the world the hermit's heart—
Fix, traveller, deep this heaven-taught lore:
Know Bruno brings it, and returns no more,'
Half sighed, half smiled his long farewell,
He turned and vanished in the brightening dell!"

WILLIAM BECKFORD, June 8, 1778.

Here, too, the travellers met with the beautiful inscription by Gray the poet in the same album, written upon his second visit to the Chartreuse, beginning—

Oh! Tu severi religio loci.

In 1783, Mr. Beckford was persuaded to print his travelling letters, and he had five hundred copies struck off in quarto, under the title of "Dreams, Waking Thoughts, and Incidents, in a Series of Letters from various parts of Europe."

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They were full of fire, imagination, and great sensibility of nature. One or two over-zealous friends persuaded him to destroy the whole edition, except half-a-dozen copies, for the very silly reason, that such a lively imagination and quickness of sensibility as they displayed, and so opposite to common modes of thinking—such, for example, as his extreme tenderness for the animal creation, and dislike of torturing it for sport, as in hunting—might prejudice him in the House of Commons, and make ministers imagine he was not capable of solid business. Nothing could be more ill-judged. He was capable of flights of fancy fully equal and more correct than many for which Burke obtained praise. He was not himself ambitious about the matter; a vast fortune, some philosophy, a love of nature, reading, and the arts, why should he toil, and clamour, and wrangle, and intrigue, to be what court favour continually made men without a tithe of his intellect, and what his indomitable pride would never suffer him to do to attain. We can only be that for which we are made by nature and inclination, friends flatter themselves as they may.

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It is remarkable that the extract given here regarding St. Bruno, came from that suppressed volume, and is nearly verbatim with a portion of that fine description of the Chartreuse which Mr. Beckford published in 1834-5. This is a proof that he still possessed a copy of his printed but unpublished quarto, from which he had extracted portions for his use in the later work. If the whole of the quarto were equal to what appeared in his "Italy, Spain, and Portugal," in relation to the Chartreuse, the suppression is still more to be regretted.

On the morning of the departure of the visitors from the Chartreuse, the coadjutor showed them into a large room which contained a number of portraits, and among the rest one little expected to be seen in that secluded spot. It was a fine half-length of Mary, Queen of Scots, painted when she resided in France. The coadjutor declared it was a genuine picture, and stated how it came into the possession of the brethren. The countenance was handsome, if not beautiful, and the whole so full of elegance, that the strangers stole back a second time to

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look at it before they took their departure back to Geneva.

During the same summer, young Beckford made an excursion with his tutor and others to the waters of Evian, in Savoy, situated in the midst of noble groves of beech, chesnut, and other forest trees, on the banks of Lake Leman. The "Waters of Evian" were out of the town some small distance, and the place was full of company, the chief part from Geneva, a thing common during the season. The company met at the springs at seven in the morning, and consisted not only of invalids, but of young persons of both sexes. Round the fountains every day, thus early, there was music and a lively dance in the open air. Young Beckford was always ready to bear his part in the gay scene, which lasted for about an hour before breakfast. The ladies and their partners were in their morning dresses, and amid the picturesque scenery around the whole, gave a pleasing impress of rural pleasure and freedom very gratifying to witness. Parties were made up on the lake, in which young Beckford was always foremost. Some explored the romantic recesses of the Bois de

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Blonay, others the Rocks of Millerie, but all met together again at dinner, at the ordinary of the principal inn at Evian. Sometimes small parties were made to breakfast on the green turf, in the open air, near the waters. Here it was that young Beckford gave a breakfast to a considerable party, and increased the attentions paid him at Evian; while the retired life, full of innocent pleasure, he led there, it is probable attached him still more strongly to country rather than town life, an attachment which never departed from him.

The next excursion from Geneva made by Mr. Beckford could not be passed over, as it gave him an opportunity of observing one of the most celebrated men of the age, the philosopher of Ferney. Colonel Hamilton having a relative intimate with Voltaire, and residing near Ferney, he promised to introduce the young Englishman and his tutor.

In passing through the village to the Chateau, the chapel erected and dedicated "Deo Optimo Maximo," over the entrance, led the travellers to ask who preached there. They were told that sometimes Voltaire himself officiated to the

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people, over whom he was lord of life and death, of which a gallows standing on the estate was proof, it being a *Seignorie* which conferred that power. The constant official at the chapel was a Jesuit named Père Adam, of whom Voltaire humorously observed—"Quoique il fût le Père Adam, il n'etoit pas le premier des hommes."

At the Chateau the visitors were received by Madam Denis, Voltaire's niece, and she announced their arrival to Voltaire. He was then a very dark-complexioned, shrivelled, thin old man, stooping much from age, being eighty-four, though not naturally a very tall man. The chief, and indeed most striking impression made by any of his features was by his eyes, which were remarkably large and penetrating.

Upon his entrance he bowed, for his address was that of a finished gentleman of the time, taking each of the party in turn, and he then said:—

"You see, gentlemen 'un pauvre Octagenaire,' about to quit this world;" then making a few observations about himself, he turned to young Beckford, and spoke some words highly complimentary of his father. He next asked

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some general questions about England; what his visitors thought of Switzerland; and for ten minutes addressed the party, all standing, upon topics of the day. He concluded his audience with addressing the Englishmen, with some little humour, in the parliamentary mode, "My lords and gentlemen, many thanks for your visit. Pray take some refreshment, and then, if it will amuse you, look into my garden and my situation, and give me leave to retire;" which he did immediately, not apparently ill-pleased at the visit.

A cold collation was served up under the auspices of Madam Denis, and a walk in the poet's garden followed. It was laid out in the formal French style. The house was not large, and plainly furnished, but its situation was admirable.

At Fonthill, before going abroad young Beckford had displayed considerable petulance and pride at times, owing to his mother's fondness nurturing his naturally haughty temper. This became much less visible abroad, indeed it seemed wholly changed, a proof of the original cause.

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After a residence of nearly a year and a half, he and his tutor returned to England, the romantic mind of the young heir much impressed with the scenery of the far-famed mountain land. They reached England before the end of December, 1778.

Lord Littleton had been dead five years, and Lord Chatham had expired, like a public character of the heroic age, at his post in the House of Lords, in the May preceding, and in the year of young Beckford's return home. His mother was therefore left without the advice of those great men at a critical moment. She was indulgent as mothers are towards only sons. The Lord Chancellor, therefore, was now his only superintendent, and it may be well imagined that the guardianship, superintendence, and notions of those who rule under his official sign are at war with nature, and regard only extrinsic things, and matters of property. However well, in the lawyer's view, that duty might have been carried out by Lord Bathurst, whose fame rests on being the son of a distinguished character of the same name, and on his work upon Evidence, a work unknown out of the law;

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he resigned the seals the same year (1778). It was predetermined, however, that his ward should see a little of his native country, as well as of foreign lands; and that before making the Grand Tour, as it was styled in those days, he should know something of England. In the summer of 1779, he set out with his tutor for the West of England, proceeding directly to Plymouth, which was at that moment threatened with a descent or a bombardment by the United fleets of France and Spain, consisting of between sixty and seventy sail of the line, and a host of frigates, all lying off in sight of the citadel. A large encampment had been formed near the town, filled with troops of the line and militia. Sir Charles Hardy, with thirty-eight sail of the line, was off the entrance of the channel, in sight of the enemy; report said endeavouring to draw them out of the narrow seas, that he might manœuvre better against a superior force. This must have been an error. Drake did not wait in the chops of the Channel. No matter—the scene was worth a visit. Young Beckford had a letter to Sir John Lindsay, the Governor of Plymouth, who



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expressed himself apprehensive for his security, having with him in the citadel only a few invalids, and very little ammunition. The visitors found the pavement of the town torn up, and great consternation abroad; but the enemy had moved off. One day, after dinner, while viewing the encampment, some remarks arose about their mutual accounts; and the tutor took a memorandum-book from his pocket to set it right. Both tutor and pupil were at once seized as spies, for taking observations on behalf of the enemy, surrounded by soldiers, and conducted to the guard-house, with a large mob at their heels. On referring the officer of the guard to the governor, they were at once released with many apologies, and the book of espionage taken from them was restored. Among those who paid the visitors great attention, was the Rev. T. Gandy, Vicar of Charles, Plymouth, a clergyman of the old school, highly respected, who died at a very advanced age a little preceding the subject of this memoir. Mount Edgcumbe was much admired by young Beckford, whose good taste at that age was so remarkably exhibited when-

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ever it was called forth by objects either of art or nature.

Returning by way of Exeter, a visit was paid to the family of his relative, Lord Courtenay, at Powderham Castle, near that city. His family consisted of a son and twelve daughters. His lordship died in 1788. He had built a lofty tower in his park, which commanded one of the finest and most extensive views in the kingdom, with which young Beckford was quite enchanted. He then visited Lord Lisburne's mansion and grounds, and Sir G. Yonge, returning, and glanced at his noble oaks and fine park; also at that of Mr. Bamfylde, in Somerset. He sojourned some days at Hazel, the residence of Sir Charles Tynte, amidst a crowd of visitors, enchanted with his host, the company, and the old baronial hall, with its painted glass windows, in which the company dined. At Sir Philip Hale's place, he exhibited that proud, scornful lip which to the last he showed when indicating contempt for any thing; nor did he express a very different feeling at Lord Egmont's, then new-old baronial castle, at Enmore. Glastonbury Tor, Thorn, ruined abbey, and the cathedral



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of Wells, were explored, and he then proceeded to Bath to visit "young" Mr. Hamilton, he who planted Pains' Hill, and made good wine there more than forty years before. He was now eighty, and having fitted up a home in the Crescent, had married a young wife, purchased ten acres of land, and was creating on their face a thousand beauties. The house where Mr. Beckford himself lived and died must stand on or overlook this very ground on the hill side. It is probable the sight strengthened that love of rural economy and gardening which was afterwards so marked a trait in Mr. Beckford's history. Lord Bathurst's woods were at that time celebrated for their beauty, stateliness, and extent. They stood unfortunately upon level ground, near Cirencester, destitute of water, prospect, ruins, and any kind of diversity to relieve the eye. They were deemed dreary and uninteresting by the young traveller, who was eager to get away from them to Gloucester. He would only remain to dine with her ladyship. Lord Bathurst was not at home. He then hurried forwards through the lovely vale of Gloucester. The city took his

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fancy with its pin manufactories, and fine old cathedral. Worcester, Hagley, the Leasowes, and Birmingham, with Bolton and Watt's manufactory, and a visit to the theatre, succeeded.

It would not be of moment to notice further than the names of places, the motions of the grand tour of the youth of fortune, in England, in those times, except that it shows what places among the numerous residences of people of fortune were deemed most worthy of notice at that period, as well as what natural objects were most in favour.

The youth and his tutor now travelled by Lichfield to Derby, and visited Lord Scarsdale. Then they proceeded to Ashbourne, Okam, Ilam, Dove-dale, and Matlock. At the last place a number of amusing parties were made up, for it was a fashionable haunt. Chatsworth, Haddon Hall, the Peak, and Buxton followed. Manchester was visited. The Duke of Bridgwater's subterranean canal was explored for nearly a mile, by young Beckford and a party of ladies who had come on in his company from Matlock. Warrington Academy, and the Presbyterian establishment for students were

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explained, as to its arrangements and vacations, and young Beckford was surprised to find the students were only allowed three months' vacation in the year. Glass-making strongly attracted his attention. The sight of Liverpool, with its buildings, and a number of French and Spanish prizes which lay there, setting the town in high spirits, seemed to make no impression upon his mind. Not so Lancaster. He was delighted with the river Lune from John o'Gaunt's castle, and at once reverted to Eton-Brea, and to his old ancestral notions.*

The sands were now crossed to Ulverston, and the distant mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland, rising into the clouds, above all the tidal influx which seemed to cut him off from the rest of the world, struck his fancy with delight. Villages, old romantic castles, woods close to vales opening on the sea. Rude rocks, tidal rivers, sea-mews, herons, and the screaming of aquatic birds, while thus cut off from the world in wild solitudes, were delightful to his young mind. Ulverston being head-

* The castle has since been metamorphosed into a jail.

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quarters, the lakes in this part of Furness were explored in turn, and the abbey in the Vale of the Deadly Night Shade delighted the sensitive mind of young Beckford so much, it was difficult to detach him from it, and return to Dalton. From thence the journey back, after exploring the scenery of the other lakes, took place in October, 1779, and the remainder of the year, and winter of 1780, were spent in Wimpole Street or at Fonthill, with his tutor.

The chancellor had recommended the grand tour before the home excursion thus concluded. In the spring of 1780, Mr. Beckford and Dr. Lettice set out for the continent, on a tour intended to occupy about ten months. They proceeded by way of Ostend, and had a rough passage. Mr. Beckford expressed no great admiration of the Low Countries. He was active, and visited all the public buildings, and lions in the churches, such as the statuary and pictures; but, as his tutor stated, his thoughts were bent southward. He also suspected that his pupil had not long before been again at his Eastern lore at stolen moments. In all events he now looked for his enjoyments

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to the infinite variety and classical beauties of Italy, to which they proposed to proceed through Germany. It was from his notes at this time that Mr. Beckford put together his letters published in 1834. Thus these formed no part of the contents of the suppressed quarto before spoken of, which related to Switzerland, and from which his account of the Grande Chartreuse was taken.

The teeming moist plains of the Low Countries, the wealthy village dunghill, and the spots where "sows and porkers bask in the sun until the hour of death and bacon arrives," had no charm for him, nor plains dotted with cows, and here and there a spire peering towards the pale blue sky. The watery sunshine, the want of interest in willowed ditches, did not suit his taste, though, after he had paid a visit to Holland, he seems to have thought better of the Netherlands. In Antwerp the silence and solitude struck him much at certain times of the day; and at twilight, when rambling about alone, "amusing fancies came upon him," to use his own words. It was on one of these occasions that he found himself, before he was

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aware of it, under the stupendous tower of the cathedral. The shadows of night were cast darkly upon the lower galleries, concealing their fretwork, and the edifice rose in a vast mass above, the tower mounting up nearly five hundred feet into the air, while the light of heaven twinkled through the interstices of the pinnacles, and produced one of those effects which seemed to have a particular charm for his feelings. But when suddenly the clock struck, and the chimes broke forth, and shook the building, he fled like a deer, for his ear was exceedingly sensitive. He congratulated himself on being able to walk Antwerp in perfect stillness at night, however late, while he had left London a scene of conflagration, under reports of artillery, and the groans of the wounded, referring to the riots of 1780.

After visiting the cabinets of Antwerp, and all the works of art, of which at that time he had an excellent critical judgment, as has been shown from his Memoirs of Extraordinary Painters, he proceeded to the Hague. He had found some worthy Berghems and Polembergs in the cabinet of a canon Knyff, and two or

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three noticeable Italian works, also a Teniers, representing St. Anthony the Hermit, surrounded with more than the usual "malicious imps" and "leering devilesses," which he well characterised as calculated to display "the whimsical buffoonery of a Dutch imagination."

He observed in another collection what he styled a "sublime thistle," executed by Snyders. It was of most heroic dimensions, and so complete a facsimile that it was impossible for any ass to behold it unmoved. This finished his visit to the cabinets of Antwerp. He sat down to the piano, and played himself in fancy out of the Netherlands. Night came on, and again he visited alone the grand massy cathedral looming darkly upwards. A solitary Franciscan was the only being seen, and he communicated the fact that the next day there was to be grand music in honor of John the Baptist. This Mr. Beckford determined to hear, and he did hear a Dutchman thunder away upon an organ, with fifty stops, and at the same time admired the master-piece of Rubens, the Descent from the Cross. Some music of Jomelli at once transported him in fancy to the south, in place

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of doing which the next day he set out for the Hague.

It must be remembered that at this time he was only in his twentieth year. The great advance he had made in the acquirement of knowledge of a varied character, shows the deep attention he paid to whatever he felt desirous of learning, and that his progress was extraordinary. Those favoured by fortune are generally the dullest of scholars, or perchance distinguish themselves, one a little above the other, in mere classical attainments. Young Beckford at twenty, was a citizen of the world in respect to knowledge; and with not more of expense than is laid out in the education of the sons of many individuals of rank or fortune, knew more at that age in a general way than any other half-a-dozen youths if not of his own, most assuredly of the present day.

Journeying into Holland, in which he anathematized tobacco smoke and green canals, uncouth bipeds and the universal sameness, he reached the Hague, and at once went to the seaside, and found a charm in the vast azure expanse of ocean which burst upon him at once, with

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two hundred vessels in sight, the last sunbeams impurpling their sails, and their path strewing the wave with brilliants. Here his imagination hinted, "What would I not give to follow the shining track? It might conduct to those fortunate western climates, those happy isles which you are so fond of painting, and I of dreaming about."

His conclusion was the sad verity, the passage of which his fancy spoke was the only one the Dutch were ignorant of. They might have islands blessed with the sun's particular attention, rich in spices, but which their rulers rendered by no means fortunate.

As to the Dutch gardens, stiff and created out of sand hills, believed in Holland to be in the English style, he visited one belonging to Count Bentinck, and declared he was astonished at the unyielding perseverance of the Dutch, who raised gardens on sand and cities out of the sea.

One of these his youthful visits was to the cabinet of the Prince of Orange. There too he found a temptation of the most holy St. Anthony, by Hell-fire Breughel, or, as sometimes denomi-

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nated, Hellish Breughel, (Peter Peterz, for there were three artists of the name, or "Old," "Hellish," and "Velvet,)" whose devils and witches, rendered more uncouth, perhaps, by being of the Dutch breed, have long been notorious. "Breughel," said young Beckford, "made his saint take refuge in a ditch, filled with harpies and creeping things innumerable, whose malice one would think must have lost Job himself the reputation of patience. Castles of steel, and fiery turrets glared on every side, from whence issued a band of junior devils. These seemed highly entertained with pinking poor St. Anthony, and whispering, I warrant you, filthy tales in his ear." He then refers to better things in the gallery, to exquisite Berghems and Wouvermans. The two Polenbergs there, he thought not good.

His fancy got continually into play, set going by some trivial object that came before him. Thus, on seeing an oriental coffer of elaborate workmanship in one of the Hague museums, containing flasks of oriental essences for perfuming a zenana, and while he scented them, he could have persuaded himself that as such

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essences dissolve enchantments, they may raise them. He could have made himself believe he was in the wardrobe of Hecuba:

"Where treasured odours breathed a costly scent."

"I saw, or seemed to see the arched apartments, the procession of the matins, the consecrated vestments: the very temple began to rise upon my sight, when a sweltering Dutch porpoise, approaching, made me a low bow, his complaisance proved full as notorious as Satan's, when, according to Catholic legends, he took leave of Luther, that disputatious heresiarch." The spell was broken. The museum was next dismissed, and a dinner at the house of an English naval officer, and then young Beckford, after exposing the ignorance of a couple of his countrymen, of a character similar to too many travelling English youths, betook him alone once more to the bosom of the nature he loved. He entered what is called "the great wood," where the trees were left wholly to nature, forest-fashion, and so free from anything Dutch, that he could not believe he was near their marshes and canals. He was pleased to find there was one

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spot in Holland where nature was suffered to have her own way, and the fashion of the country protected even the hares and rabbits. On the other hand, in the stiff gardens of the choicest flowers, their rich perfumes on one hand were answered by the filthy exhalations of canals and puddles on the other, natural, he thought, to the Dutch constitution. He declared his opinion that Holland was once all under water, and the present inhabitants descendants of fish; their oysterishness of eye, and flabbiness of complexion, seeming to prove it. Thus he left the Hague, determined never to revisit it, unless he grew wiser and less curious.

Leyden had the honour of his next visit, and then Amsterdam, where he saw the Stadthouse, on a hot Bengal day. Next he went to Utrecht, visited the Moravian establishment at Ziest, and saw Zinzendorf's habitation, remarking how the fair-ones were kept out of sight of the young visitor.

At Aix-la-Chapelle he explored the five large galleries of paintings, and admired some valuable pictures. He censured Rubens's Last Day as disgusting. Hosts of sinners striving to avoid

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the tangle of the Devil's tail; with other anomalous representations from which he felt only disgust. He was compensated by a Holy Family of Procaccini, in a different room, beyond what any idea could conceive of gracefulness. The features, truly celestial, deeply struck his young fancy. If ever he beheld an inspired countenance, he asserted, it was there.

The precious bodies of the Magi, who travelled to Bethlehem, were at Aix-la-Chapelle; and the traveller paid his devotions at the shrine of monkery. Mr. Beckford had imagined their dust might have been reposing under some Eastern cupola, until he was thus undeceived. "May not the Emperor of Morocco be some day canonized in Lapland?" thought the irreligious young traveller.

His next visit was to Bonn, the road side lined with beggars, crucifixes, convent walls, lazy monks, and dejected peasants. The traveller looked away from them at the tops of the distant azure mountains which bound the view, longing to be at their summits; and built castles and capitols in the clouds in all the extravaganza of Piranesi. These vanished upon

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entering Bonn. The inn was opposite the Elector's residence, but it looked contemptible, compared with the palaces his fancy had just been rearing, though its plaistered walls and prominent columns were seen in a favourable twilight hue.

The university had no attractions for him, while he was impatient to get on to the banks of the Rhine, which from Bonn to Coblentz are so picturesque. He set out the next day, July 11, 1780; and descending from his carriage, walked by the river wherever an advantage was to be gained by it. He saw the vast rafts of timber, and cottages upon them, come floating down from the river on which, in his youthful fancy, he thought he should like to construct a moveable village, with his friends, and thus live propelling it floating from island to island. It must be remembered, as their author observed, that his remarks were written in the bloom and heyday of youthful spirits and youthful confidence. He slighted Coblentz, and was more pleased to continue his journey through the country, to inhale the fresh breezes and perfumes from flowers, and mark the cloudless



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sky, and bask in the sunshine, than mingle in the streets of the old-fashioned German towns. At Ems, indeed, he loitered for a short time; his youthful fancy pleased with the valley of the Lahn, and a sort of Indian life among wilds and mountains peculiarly adapted to his taste. Every snug locality seemed to have a charm belonging to itself. Yet amidst all, he made frequent references to his Eastern lore; showing that his partiality for it still existed, perhaps because it permitted a wider range for the imagination than the plodding Germans could impart. He was more charmed with the country near Ems than with the idle visitants to its waters, who were apparently unconscious of that which afforded him the highest gratification. He, though so young, turned the customary objects in such places into ridicule. Even an account of the visit of Prince Orloff, "*avec sa crande maidresse, son shampelan, et guelgues tames donneur,*" to adopt the German French of the locality, had no attraction for him. Once indeed he confessed himself alarmed at the dangers which he was informed awaited him on the route he was going to take, and he did not go

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to bed under the most agreeable impressions; but he found nothing to alarm him between Ems and Wisbaden, which he travelled the next day in perfect security, sleeping soundly at the last-named town.

The youthful mind of the traveller, it is clear, was constituted differently from that of most youths of fashion and fortune. It was the love of nature which attracted him, and not the circles of fashionable life. Where the Danube swept majestically along, here and there, seen near Ulm, in all its grandeur, he imbibed the purest enjoyment. He fancied, in some places, that he was actually travelling over those vast and flowery Savannahs, to which Indian tribes repair once or twice in a century, to settle the rights of the chase and lead off their customary dances, their highest enjoyment, and that which they paint to themselves as foretastes of their future felicity: where the seas

"Are for ever calm—the skies for ever bright."

There was a remarkable susceptibility of those impressions in young Beckford. Thus we find him luxuriating in the ideas of the Indians re-



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garding scenes of future felicity,—to be their own in another state of being—where they are welcomed — where their favorite attendants, being separated from them while on earth, are restored again in this ethereal region, and skim freely over the vast level space; "now hailing one groupe of beloved friends, and now another. Mortals newly ushered by death into this world of pure blue sky and boundless meads, seeing the long-lost objects of their affection advancing to meet them,—whilst flights of familiar birds, the purveyors of many an earthly chase, once more attend their progress; and the shades of their faithful dogs seem coursing each other below. The whole region is filled with low murmurs and tinkling sounds, which increase in melody as its new denizens proceed, who, at length, unable to resist the thrilling music, spring forward in ecstacies to join the eternal round."

Such were the visions fancy presented to the youthful imagination of Beckford in those years when individuals of his age are taken up with social frivolities, and pleasures of any but a reflective character. The town-hall of Augsburgh he criticised in these words: "I should not be

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surprised at a burgomaster assuming a formidable dignity in such a room." The women he described as in the very dresses in which Hollar formerly engraved them. The people made way for him as he came out of the hall, with as much silent respect as if he had been really the wise sovereign of Israel; but when he got to his inn "an execrable sourcroutish supper was served up to my majesty; I scolded in an unroyal style, and soon convinced myself I was no longer Solomon."

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## CHAPTER V.

MUNICH—MITTENWALD—RHENISH RAFTS—YOUTHFUL IMAGININGS.

THE great fair was about to be held at Munich when he arrived there. He visited the Elector's palace and gardens, all miserably artificial. Here he joined some country people of his own, amidst company which, in their gay dresses, looked like the fine people represented upon Dresden porcelain. He visited the tea-rooms, where every distinction of rank and privilege seemed forgotten, and vanity was the order of the day. He visited the Place, but would rather have trodden the turf of the mountains, though the floor of the chapel was paved with rare and costly stones and gems. Mammon could have looked at the pavement for ever; but the young visitor was more attracted by a thumb of St. Peter,

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enshrined amid some delicate antique cameos, such as Leda and a Sleeping Venus, a little too Pagan for an Apostle's finger. A few pieces of painting only could be seen, the gallery being under repair; but young Beckford saw and admired Rubens' Massacre of the Innocents, full of expressive horrors. Notwithstanding that he was impatient to get out into the country again, where he was delighted with the forests, the flowers, rocks, wood, mountain firs, and the mountain ash in a particular manner pleasing him. While thus admiring, a thunder-storm came on, and Mr. Beckford and his tutor passed the night in a cottage on the shore of the Walchen Lake; and proceeded from thence, the next day, to Mittenwald. Here he encountered a peasant family, who were full of kindness and hospitality towards the strangers; but they could not make themselves understood, and the waving of hands was the only mode of communication.

Mittenwald pleased the travellers so much, with the galleries of the inn, and balconies facing the mountains, the fine trout and exquisite cherries, that they remained there the night, amidst

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the most beautiful and soul-tranquillizing scenery. This was heightened by the villagers, it being St. Anna's day, attending divine worship at the chapel. The fair dames casting a bewitching eye at the strangers, amid adorations, the fervor of which was attested by sighs and beatings of the bosom, so that the young traveller declared he was near becoming a convert to idolatry in so amiable a form, and worshipping Saint Anna on the behalf of her namesakes.

That early attachment to nature, which seemed a part of his existence, was more and more developed as he proceeded upon this journey. In one place he encountered, in a dense wood of beech and chestnut, a tract which led him to a cascade, the sound of which he had heard for some time. How admirably he struck off the impressions it produced:—

"I struggled, until reaching a goat track, it conducted me, on the brink of the foaming waters, to the very depths of the cliff, whence issues a stream, which, dashing impetuously down, strikes against a ledge of rocks, and sprinkles the impending thicket with dew. Big

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drops hung on every spray, and glittered on the leaves, partially gilt by the rays of the declining sun, whose mellow hues softened the rugged summits, and diffused a repose, a divine calm, over this deep retirement, which inclined me to imagine it the extremity of the earth—the portal of some other region of existence—some happy world beyond the dark groves of pine, the caves and awful mountains, where the river takes its source! Impressed with this romantic idea, I hung eagerly over the gulf, and fancied I could distinguish a voice bubbling up with the waters; then looked into the abyss, and strained my eyes to penetrate its gloom—but all was dark and unfathomable as futurity."

Italy before him, neither Inspruck, nor Schomberg, nor Steinach could arrest him. He had a desire alone to enter classic Italy. Proceeding from Brixen to Bolsano and onward, his heart beat quick on entering the Venetian state. The Brenta foaming and dashing along, and rocks mantled with vines and gardens, vases of citron and orange at every door, and the softness of the air communicating to his young feelings the impression of Italy, it was soon confirmed by

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the antique ramparts and cypresses of Bassano. Charmed with Pachioretti, he gave himself up to the enjoyment of the musical divinity of the hour, and then to the City of the Sea, of which he stated that Canaletti had rendered all verbal description superfluous. Here he went over again the history of the past splendours of Venice, dreamed of Frederick Barbarossa, and was charmed with the Marriage of Cana in Galilee, by Paul Veronese. He was so completely master of the history of the republic, by his previous reading, that he had the clue to all which was of moment to be seen in that interesting city—an advantage possessed by few youths of twenty years of age. His recorded remarks at this age, in his letters published in later life, show how well he was grounded in principles, so that he had but to prove on the spot any views that were correct, and amend his misconceptions. His youthful fancy was much struck with the Place St. Mark, and with a Loggetta or guard-house of most finished proportions. He was so swallowed up in admiration of what he saw, that the sbirri thought him distracted. "I was stalking proudly about, like an actor in an an-

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cient Greek tragedy, lifting up his hands to the consecrated fanes and images around, expecting the reply of his attendant chorus, and declaiming the first verses of Œdipus Tyrannus." Such, he describes, was the state of enthusiasm in which he felt himself. Yet few things among the motley population of the city seem to have escaped his observation; gondoliers, intriguers, strollers, mountebanks, the cassinos, were all scrutinized with the ardent curiosity of one in the opening of existence. He entered into the better society of the city at Madam de Rosenberg's, who presented the youth to several Venetian families of note at the great cassino, where he saw "a great many ladies negligently dressed, their hair falling very freely about them, and innumerable adventures written in their eyes." He was of opinion that there was little vivacity among the Venetians, only a feverish and false activity, from the dissipated lives which they led in early youth.

In speaking of the walls of the portico front of San Giorgio Maggiore, he observed them covered with grim visages, sculptured in marble, whose mouths "gaped for accusations, and swallowed

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every lie that malice could dictate." He was very desirous of hearing "some little dialogue within, between the Three Inquisitors and the Council of Ten." The terrors of the tribunals here had a deep effect upon his mind. What other sovereign, save him of Venice—the head of a republic—could revel in halls so polluted with tears? "However gaily disposed, could one dance," as young Beckford well inquired, "could one dance with pleasure on a pavement, beneath which lie damp and gloomy caverns, whose inhabitants waste away by painful degrees, and feel themselves whole years a-dying! Impressed with these terrible ideas, I could not regard the palace without horror, and wished for the strength of a thousand antediluvians, to level it with the sea, lay open the secret recesses of punishment, and admit free gales and sunshine into every den." A hallowed wish, not fulfilled by the successors of the Council of Ten, in the iron tyranny of Austria, which has not failed to prolong there, to our own day, the reign of human calamity. The Piombi are still in worthy keeping; the Austrian is a gaoler worthy such abodes, and the Ponte dei Sospiri

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is still the monument of a tyrannic power not less execrable than that of old.

At Venice, young Beckford fell in with a M. de Viloison, an active investigator of Homer, who quoted four or five languages with fluency, but had not one idea of his own. He went to see and admire Titian's Martyrdom of St. Paul and St. Peter; visited some churches on the islands, and listened to the music at a convent, that seemed to issue "from the gates of Paradise ajar." In several instances, at Venice, he was delighted with the music. He went to the Mendicanti to hear the oratorio of Sisera, with which he was much struck. The orchestra had females among its number, who played on all sorts of instruments. "Nothing is more common than to see a delicate white hand journeying across an enormous double-bass, or a pair of roseate cheeks puffing with all their efforts at a French horn." Some that are grown old and amazonian, who have abandoned their fiddles and their lovers, take vigorously to the kettle-drums; and one poor limping lady, who had been crossed in love, made an admirable figure on the bassoon.

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Leaving Venice, and continuing his course along the peaceful Brenta, he proceeded to Padua, where he visited the shrine of St. Anthony, one of his own saints, as he styled him. Here he found dcerepit women and feeble children praying the saint to afford them a propitious market for their wares that day; in other parts of the edifice were penitents smiting their breasts, and, in yet darker recesses, several prostrate, desperate sinners, all invoking St. Anthony, whose lofty altar was decked with lavish magnificence. The sculptures about the altar were fine, Sansovino having executed the carvings. Tombs, churches, pictures, and music took up the traveller's time here. He heard high mass in the church of St. Anthony, and soon after set off for Vicenza. Continuing his journey by Reggio, he came in sight of the Apennines, and was at once absorbed in conjecturing what was then going forward in their recesses. Hermits at prayers, beautiful Contadine fetching water from the purest of springs, banditti dragging their victims to caverns and fastnesses—such were the illusions of his fancy on first observing those far-famed mountains at a distance. In

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such illusions the time passed, until the sun went down, and the moon rising, lit the carriage into Modena. From thence he proceeded to Bologna, renowned for sausages and lapdogs. He was struck with the view of the convent of Madonna del Monte, joined to the town by a long corridor; but he soon quitted the place, as an earthquake had just before put the land and people much out of humour.

As he approached the Apennines, a chill wind blew down upon the travellers, and made melancholy music in the chestnut woods that covered the mountain sides. Young Beckford amused himself with trying to interpret the language of the leaves, not greatly to his own satisfaction. It serves to show how active his imagination was at that period of life. His reverie ended in a wretched hamlet, on the bleak brow of a mountain, where a few eggs alone, and some faggots for making a fire, were all that could be obtained; but pitching his bed in a warm corner, he soon contrived to forget in sleep all his illusions and inquietudes. He and his companion quitted their miserable shelter soon after daydawn, and proceeded along a miserable road until they

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descended into a milder climate, until they obtained a distant view of Florence, surrounded with gardens and terraces. The moon lit up a fairy scene, which was too soon exchanged for the gates of the city of Florence; where, to use his own expressive words, he knew not "on what first to bend attention, and ran childishly by the ample ranks of sculptures, like a butterfly in a parterre, that skims, before he fixes, over ten thousand flowers."

Here the Olympic Jove, the Minerva breathing of divinity, and Cybele, with her "tiara of proud towers," fixed his youthful attention; and a representation of Somnus drew forth his censures, from the statue not being coincident with his ideas of the drowsy god, who seems to have been a favourite subject with the young connoisseur. Chamber after chamber displayed their contents to the admiring young Englishman. Perfumed cabinets, and alabaster columns, and roofs glittering in arabesque work of azure and gold. Collections of small paintings, and among them a head of Medusa, by Leonardo da Vinci, of a deadly paleness of countenance, and the mouth exhaling a pestilential vapour. The

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snakes beginning to untwist their folds, one or two creeping away, or crawling up the rocks, struck him very forcibly, indeed much more than anything else in the apartment. There was a Polemberg, which he described as one of the strangest he ever beheld. It represented Virgil ushering Dante into the regions of eternal punishment, amid the ruins of burning edifices that glared across the infernal waters, executed in the artist's softest manner. Innumerable shapes were represented as in the act of preying upon the damned, and one devil, in the shape of an enormous lobster, was busy at work, pinching up and making a meal of the writhing mortal who, in vain, endeavoured to escape from his ravening claws. Such are the disgusting subjects upon which the Catholic superstition induced men of talent to squander their time, and aid in leading the human mind astray from truth, to subject it to the designs of priest-craft.

How the Venus de Medicis affected him he has left on record; and his delight at a figure of Morpheus, in the form of a graceful child, holding a bunch of poppies. All the lions of Florence



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seem to have been searched out and examined with that youthful ardour, and enjoyed with that zest, which is always experienced on first placing similar objects before eyes of taste—the freshness of the novelty yielding an enjoyment like that of a draught of a crystal spring in a dry and weary land. The desire to hear Pacchierotti arrested his explorations in Florence to visit Lucca, which he reached in the afternoon, along a clean road, through copses of chestnut, and the loveliest environs to a city exceedingly ugly, with dungeon-like houses and grated windows. Here he met with disappointments and annoyances in place of pleasure. He made amends by rambling among the hills covered with the arbutus, and stretching himself on the grass with a tablet and pencil, a basket of grapes by his side, and a crooked stick to hook down chestnuts. He mingled in the town only to attend the concerts and musical meetings, and got into a scrape with the Lucchese by prevailing upon Pacchierotti to ramble among the mountains, to the ruin of their opera, in case he should chance to get a cold or hoarseness. A whole Italian city was disturbed, and thrown into commotion,

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and the prime ministers of the republic deputed to lecture the great Tweedledum on the hazard he ran in such excursions as those into which the young Englishman led him. Some of these excursions were directed to scenes of exquisite rural beauty, the azure tints of the distances in which, made him almost think that Velvet Breughel's blue landscapes were scarcely exaggerations. In his rides, young Beckford visited the noble chateau of Garzoni, which he has described so bewitchingly in his youthful notes, as surrounded with everything that could charm the vision, regale the palate in the pendent grape, or perfume the atmosphere. He relates how he fell upon the purple clusters, like a native of the north, unaccustomed to such affluence of nature's productions, one of those Goths who

> "Scent the new fragrance of the breathing rose,
> And quaff the pendant vintage as it grows."

There he visited the Conte Nobili, and drank, on the spot, of his wine, which might have defied Constantia. On returning and entering Lucca, Pacchierotti coughed, and half the city



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wished the young Englishman at the devil. What a characteristic of a people that are for ever talking of achieving their independence! To this day, as before, they send forth fiddlers for heroes, supplying with the thunders of the orchestran bass the roar of the cannon, that can alone realize that of which they dream, and then waking, betake themselves to the most effeminate of the sciences for their consolation. Young Beckford's experiences of 1780, and those of threescore years afterwards he could not then perceive, would not differ much from each other.

He left Lucca for Pisa, and was set down opposite the Duomo. He characterized it as somewhat oriental in appearance, perhaps from the strong hold all belonging to the East had upon his imagination. The cupolas appeared to have given rise to this idea. The leaning tower did not seem to strike him so much as other travellers. He was more pleased with the decorations of the interior, the mosaic pavement, the porphyry columns, and rare marbles it displayed, independently of the sculptures of Michael Angelo, and the many fine paintings.

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The Campo Santo, with the hallowed earth from Jerusalem, conveyed there when Pisa was in its high and palmy state, produced only a rank crop of weeds, except where the pavement was laid, richly covered with monumental inscriptions. In the same building he found rows of Pagan sarcophagi, all within the consecrated limits. There, seated on a slab of *giallo antico*, he contemplated the domes and tracery of the cathedral, so exotic on the whole, that it was easy for the beholder to credit he was in fairy land. From Pisa he proceeded to Leghorn, on the way luxuriating in all the genial sensations of spring in October. Vast bushes of myrtle in luxuriant bloom grew on every side; the air was soft, the sound of the distant surges came upon the traveller's ear, and a calm, like that of infant hours, stole over him. Stretched on the turf, he seemed for a few minutes to have forgotten every care; but when he began to inquire into happiness, he found it vanish. "I felt myself without those I loved the most, in situations they would have warmly admired;" and without those, the woodlands looked pleasant in vain. Soon afterwards, he reached his des-

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tination. The fresh gales of the Mediterranean charmed him; and hurrying to the port, he sat on a rocky reef, and listened in silence to the waves that broke over them, until he forgot himself.

His impressions on seeing the Mole, and the miserable Corsican galleys it sheltered, were by no means prepossessing. On one occasion he saw a figure step out of a boat, which bore a resemblance to one of Neptune's train, dripping with water; the stranger carried some specimens of coral for sale, of a rare species, which were at once purchased, and carried off to his carriage, basket and all; and he then drove back to Pisa, revisited the Campo Santo, and so returned to Lucca, the town staring at his speedy re-arrival. From thence he proceeded again to Florence, to an apartment over the Arno, which, swollen by rain, had become a roaring torrent. Watching it by moonlight, and the deep shadows around, the bell of the convent of Boboli began to toll, and the sound filled him with gloomy recollections. He closed the casement, and read till midnight of the Guelphs and Ghibelines, of conspiracies and assassinations, and of the black

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story of ancient Florence. He again went over the noble remnants of ancient, and the fine specimens of modern art. Bronzes by John of Bologna, works of Cellini, sculptures by Bondinelli, were all resurveyed, together with the curiosities of the Castle, and the rarities collected by the Medici. Even in that year, in 1780, the stolid Austrians, the blight, and blast, and pest of fair Italy, exhibited their contempt for the memory of the Medici, whom they were too ignorant and unrefined to imitate. They affected to despise them as having been merchants.

The same love of nature, which ever marked Mr. Beckford through life, appeared even in the midst of the rare works of art in Florence. After dinner, he stole away, as evening drew on, to the thickets of Boboli. There, reaching the brow of a hill, he seated himself under a statue of Ceres, and sketched the cupola of the Duomo, and other objects in the neighbourhood, until the sun went down, and then he repaired to Lord T——'s, who lived in a fine house, covered with blue and silver, full of stuffed birds, alabaster Cupids, and prettinesses without end.

+ Lord Tilney: S[illegible]

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Neither his lordship nor his abode were worthy of notice. Slopping and sipping tea, and dawdling being the order of the time, he walked off from thence to the Opera. There the first soprano was an enormous porpoise of a being; and could a porpoise sing, it would have been in his style. After hearing Pacchierotti so lately, it was no wonder young Beckford uttered with others his bag of maledictions, and retired.

The malaria was reported to be very bad at Rome — a disappointment the greater, as the traveller was heartily tired of Florence. He had no resource but the woods of the Cascini in the morning, and the thickets of Boboli. He scrambled to the summits of the hills noted by Dante, admired that of Fiesole, and the Val d'Arno lost in the distant haze. He visited a Franciscan convent buried in cypresses, and a chapel designed by Michael Angelo. Thus engaged, it appeared that his reveries were interrupted by the necessity of paying a visit of ceremony to the Grand Duke's palace. The Grand Duchess having given birth to a princess in the night, there was a grand gala in the

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morning, and every body went to see the christening. The Grand Duke having for some time talked politics, the doors of a temporary chapel were flung open, and the ceremony began with a flourish of trumpets, the whole very theatrical, as usual on such occasions. Dining at Lord T——'s, the young traveller stole away, as usual, to the woods of Boboli, from whence he saw the Duomo lit up at a distance. In the city, fish were frying to rejoice the Grand Duke's subjects, bonfires lit in the streets, and "hubbubs and stinks" of every denomination so prevalent, that he took refuge at last in the theatre, where he found all bad, "no taste, no arrangement, paltry looking-glasses, and rat's-tail candles."

On resolving upon a pilgrimage to Vallombrosa, the people of Florence declared he would be frozen. He proceeded with a friend on horseback, and encountering a chill blast or two among the groves of pines, they galloped on through lawns and meadows beautifully green, and cliffs and mountains clothed with beech to their summits. The verdure was everywhere equal to that of England, moistened by streams that

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never dry up. The visitors alighted before the entrance of the convent; a blazing fire was within, and five or six overgrown friars, sleek and rosy, seemed to have no ill opinion of their existing state. Letters of introduction produced the heads of the Order, round and plump as Chinese. At dinner they put all sorts of foolish questions to the visitors, so that, when the repast was concluded, young Beckford and his companion repaired to the forest; the fathers, waddling after them, were soon left behind. Milton's description of Vallombrosa had come to mind, just as some of the fathers, puffing and blowing, who had arrived by a short cut, interrupted the thought.

"You have missed the way; the hermitage, with the fine picture by Andrea del Sarto, which all the English admire, is on the opposite side of the wood; there, don't you see it on the point of the cliff?"

"Yes, yes," I said, a little peevishly; "I wonder the devil has not pushed it down long ago; it seems to invite his kick."

"Satan," answered the old Pagod, very dryly, "is full of malice; but whoever drinks of a

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spring which the Lord causeth to flow near the hermitage, is freed from his illusions."

"Are they so?—then, I pray thee, conduct me thither, for I have great need of such salutary waters."

The senior then related some legendary stories of the nature in which young Beckford delighted. He pointed out where "Gualbertus used to sleep; and, turning himself to the west, saw a long succession of saints and martyrs sweeping athwart the sky, and gilding the clouds with far brighter splendours than the setting sun."

A consecrated cleft was shown in the mountain, a hard penitential couch. The visitor drank of the holy fountain, but could form no opinion of the picture so much boasted of, being too much absorbed in admiration of external nature. As he was returning, he heard the sound of a bell. The young boys of the seminary there, dressed in black, and looking pale and wan, were moving to their dwelling, under the superintendence of a gaunt priest, who drove them along like a herd, so that there was no opportunity of asking them whether the soli-

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tude of Vallombrosa suited their age and vivacity. The night was chill. The next day the convent was surveyed, and young Beckford played on the organ—one of the most harmonious he ever touched. He and his companion then mounted their horses, and, in a few hours, found themselves in Florence, clear of

> —— "the autumnal leaves
> That strew the brooks in Vallombrosa."

Sienna was the next Italian city that attracted the young traveller, and the cathedral the first object in the town. The front he characterized as covered with statues and relievos, without end or meaning. Bustos of all the sovereign pontiffs, from the first bishop to Adrian IV., formed the cornice. It was said that Pope Joan was among them, between Leo IV. and Benedict III., until the year 1600, when the Lady Pope was turned out, at the request of Clement VIII., to make room for Zecharias I.

Some missals here were exquisitely illuminated, and there were barbarous paintings in fresco. He did not linger long at Sienna, but passing by Radicofani, entered the papal territory,

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admiring, as he passed Aquapendente, the cliffs mounted with ilex and chestnut. He then proceeded to Viterbo, setting out in the dark. Day broke over the Lago di Vico, and the rugged chain of the Apennines was seen in one direction, and the shining ocean in another. Young Beckford's remarks upon reaching this spot are highly characteristic of the man, and that reflective and imaginative tendency which was so peculiarly his own characteristic. "It was," said he, "upon this vast surface so many illustrious actions were performed, and I know not where a mighty people could have chosen a grander theatre. Here was space enough for the march of armies, and verge enough for encampments; levels for martial games, and room for that variety of roads and causeways that led from the Capital to Ostia. How many triumphant legions have trodden these pavements! How many captive kings! What throngs of cars and chariots once glittered on their surface! savage animals dragged from the interior of Africa; and the ambassadors of Indian princes, followed by their exotic train, hastening to implore the favour of the senate!

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"During many ages this eminence commanded almost every day such illustrious scenes; but all are vanished: the splendid tumult is passed away; silence and desolation remain. Dreary flats thinly scattered over with ilex, and barren hillocks crowned with solitary towers, were the only objects we perceived for several miles. Now and then we passed a few black, ill-favoured sheep straggling by the way side, near a ruined sepulchre, just such animals as an ancient would have sacrificed to the manes. Sometimes we crossed a brook, whose ripplings were the only sounds that broke the general stillness, and observed the shepherds' huts on its banks, propped up with broken pedestals, and marble friezes. I entered one of them, whose owner was observed tending his herds, and began writing upon the sand, and murmuring a melancholy song. Perhaps the dead listened to me from their narrow cells. The living I can answer for; they were far enough removed. You will not be surprised at the dark tone of my musings in so sad a scene, especially as the weather lowered; and you are well acquainted how greatly I depend upon skies and sunshine.

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To-day I had no blue firmament to revive my spirits; no genial gales, no aromatic plants to irritate my nerves, and lend at least a momentary animation. Heath and a greyish kind of moss are the sole vegetation which covers this endless wilderness. Every slope is strewed with the relics of a happier period; trunks of trees, shattered columns, cedar beams, helmets of bronze, skulls, and coins, are frequently dug up together."*

How well the foregoing description tallies with fact, how pregnant it is with reflections that occur only to first-rate minds, need not be repeated. It is a picture in words; it is a

* There is little doubt but the writings of Mr. Beckford relating to Italy and Switzerland that bear a date antecedent to 1780, and were published between 1834 and 1836, were almost verbatim from the youthful work already mentioned as having been suppressed, to oblige his friends, just before he came of age. The extract here given relative to the Grand Chartreuse, from that suppressed work, may be compared with what he published in 1834, and it will be found similar. That extract was from the quarto alluded to, and not from what Mr. Beckford himself published. Such reflective writing from a youth, renders its author an extraordinay instance of precocious talent.

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landscape addressing the vision, the mind showing nature not only as she is, but as she was, and at the same time relating the history of ages past, and its conclusion in the common desolation of empires. The adjuncts to that history, the waste scene, the shattered column, the decaying cedar, and the helmets, skulls, and coins, make up a picture so faithful, so admirably addressed to the attention of the observer, that few descriptions in any language, so thrown off in a travelling journal, will be found to vie with it in fidelity, or in the beauty of the language in which it is conveyed. The mind of its author must have been exquisitely susceptible of the slightest vibrations which struck upon it, and the high degree of mental culture he had received enabled him to turn them to account, in describing the scenes presented to him while travelling—detailing, too, those minutiæ which escape the mass of persons who, hurrying over highways, or in railway carriages, and dining at hotels, imagine they know the country through which they pass.

Young Beckford's sensations in obtaining the first view of the "Eternal City," he stated he

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could never forget. This was no doubt true not only of him, but of those few in comparison with the multitudes who visit it, who carry in their memory the mighty deeds, the heroic characters, the triumphs, and the decadence of that renowned "mother of dead empires." How dome and tower peered above the vulgar roof, and St. Peter's rose above the summit of the Vatican! He met the God's self-assumed vicegerent returning from vespers, like a conqueror from his triumph, with a flourish of trumpets. His feelings and observations on entering St. Peter's with all the vivid susceptibility of youth, he has recorded, in that elegant style so little like any other in the language, and which most persons have ascribed to his declining years, in place of the youthful period within a twelvemonth of which he produced "Vathek."

Among the architects and painters of Rome, he went not only to view but to criticise. His tutor, an excellent scholar, and pains-taking, conscientious man, seems to have possessed little taste for the fine arts. The noble collection of pictures at old Fonthill, the artists whom his father



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continually invited to his table, and a natural regard for works of art, seems to have led him to their study. It has been already stated that his love for Oriental learning, and his acquirement of the Persian and Arabic were his own work. These met no encouragement from his instructors, and it is possible his fondness for the fine arts grew out of a spirit of opposition to the course which his friends wished him to take in public life, a course for which he had not the slightest relish. He was too proud to play off the tricks of the statesman, and to use any means to an end. He did not want to make a fortune, and there was from his earliest youth something retiring in his character, a shyness, a feeling no doubt increased by his private education, and want of collision with youths of his own age, which would have hardened him to the boldness and roughness, as well as to the habits of a public school. The advance he made in learning and general acquirements, he would then have exchanged for a better knowledge of Greek, in which he professed to be no great adept, and the art of making bad Greek and Latin verses until he went to a university, on leaving which

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his knowledge at twenty years of age would have been miserably limited, except as to longs and shorts, to what it was when he entered Rome, feasted his vision with the glories of St. Peter's and lamented the whitewashed roof of the venerable Pantheon.

From Rome, after exploring the vicinity, young Beckford proceeded to Naples. He lodged at Veletri, not without some notice of the malaria, and many of the various spots renowned in the historic or poetic page, as the rock of Circe, and the Appian Way. At the Mola di Gaeta they welcomed in the fishing boats, with cargoes such as Neptune would have grudged Æneas and Ulysses, and finally entered Naples during a storm, and were rocked to slumber by the breaking of the waves on the rocky foundation of a fortress beneath their windows, around which the lightning played.

Impatient for the dawn of day, it came at last with a cloudless sky, so that the white buildings of Caprea were distinctly visible at the distance of thirty miles. Here the young traveller states that he drank fully of the beauties of the scene around him. Nor was this all. He went to



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the palace, where he found a courtly mob, daubed with lace, and be-perriwigged prelates, friars, all the world, hurrying to the presence-chamber, to see the king eat, as people go now-a-days to see wild beasts fed. The king devoured his food in a circular enclosure, with fine clothes and smiling faces around him, and when he had finished, twenty poking necks were protruded in a struggle as to who should first kiss the royal hand, the desirable object of the company. What a dereliction of all that is manly and noble is such an exhibition! His Majesty all the time looked at the end of his own nose. He seems to have been a very fair representative of majesty as it flourished in 1780. He loved to stab boars, to shoot down pigeons, and no Windsor huntsman cheering on the royal hounds after a poor tame stag, could enjoy himself more than this specimen of the "Lord's anointed," when he could get a battledore or an angling-rod into the hands of divine right.

It was at Naples, upon this youthful tour, that Mr. Beckford made the acquaintance of the first Lady Hamilton, the wife of Sir William, at that time British Ambassador at the court. She

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was an excellent performer on the piano. No one Mr. Beckford ever heard could produce such soothing effects;—they seemed an emanation from her pure mind. She died in 1782. It was thought that if she had lived, she might have been the means of arresting that tide of baseness and corruption which at last drove the court to Sicily. At the house of Sir William Hamilton, whose second marriage is an historical event, there were often assembled a number of lovely females, artists, and literati, of whom Mr. Beckford has recorded some of the names. Of one Gagliani he relates that he found him outvie Polichinello in loquacity and gesticulation; and that to give an idea of the Neapolitan fashionables, it was sufficient to allude to the gross licentiousness of his stories, exceeding all those bounds of decency and decorum to which Englishmen are accustomed to pay honour. Visiting the theatre of San Carlo the traveller heard Marchesi sing to very miserable music. The court was present; and when royalty withdrew, noise and hubbub made up the rest of the entertainment.

Young Beckford visited Virgil's tomb at

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Pausillipo, clambered the neighbouring rocks, and was enraptured with the Bay of Naples—the distant view of Vesuvius—and the far off town of Capræ. He rambled over the shore at Baii, having with him a guide, recommended by Sir William Hamilton. He feasted his vision on the Isles of Procida and Ischia, which were seen clothed in that purple bloom so exquisitely beautiful, and so peculiar to the climate. He could not help taking a boat at Pozzuoli, and getting rowed out upon that blue ocean, on the shore of which his fancy shaped out of the ruins yet extant the bay as it was in the old Roman ages, with rows of columns and pavilions upon its shores, and taper cypresses spiring above the ballustrades. Landing near the fragments of a temple, he found himself alone, being free from those plagues on similar excursions, English travellers and English connoisseurs. He wandered to the reservoir constructed by Nero to supply his fleet with water. He entered all kinds of grots and excavations, and stood contemplating from an eminence the Mare Morto, or Dead Lake. He hurried off from thence to the promontory of Misenus, at the base of which he found springs

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issuing from rocks of pumice, and hillocks concealed by thickets of bay. Despite a hot sun, he attained the summit of the promontory. On one occasion he took shelter in a hut inhabited by an old woman, who beckoned him into her cottage. After some preliminary conversation, he succeeded in persuading her to tell him her history, to which she had alluded. Among other things, she related to him an adventure which had occurred since she had been living on that spot. It will be found in Mr. Beckford's published letters, but is too long to extract. The impression it left upon his mind was such that, using his own words, "My blood thrilled as I walked by the gulph to call my guide, who stood aloof under the cliffs. He seemed to think, from the paleness of my countenance, that I had heard some gloomy prediction, and shook his head, when I turned round to bid my old hostess adieu. It was a melancholy evening, and I could not refrain from tears, and whilst winding through the defiles of the rocks, he sad scenes which had passed among them recurred to my memory."*

* See vol. i. "Italy and Spain, 1834," for the particulars of this story.

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From Naples young Beckford bent his course homeward. Up to the time of leaving the south of Italy, his mornings were spent in visiting palaces, churches, antiquities, paintings, and works of sculpture, as before under the guidance of his tutor. The progress of the young traveller was rapid for the first ten days; writing from Augsburg, under the date of January, 1781, he said, "I have been traversing Lapland; the winds whistling, and the cones in the pine forest showering down upon my head." Travelling sometimes by moonlight, he could not help being struck with the awful aspect of the Tyrolese mountains, now buried in snow, the streams frozen, and every thing human appearing petrified.

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## CHAPTER VI.

ARRIVAL IN ENGLAND—CESSATION OF PUPILLAGE—REJOICINGS ON COMING OF AGE—SECOND TOUR ABROAD—LOVE OF RURAL SCENES—VENICE AGAIN—PADUA—THE CAMPAGNA — NAPLES—AL RAOUI—POETICAL ESSAYS.

DURING the preceding tour, young Beckford's health and spirits were not good. He complained, in the first instance, of the damps of Venice, which he visited on his returning. He passed through Augsburgh to Paris, where remaining a few weeks, he came back to England. He appears to have gone almost immediately into Wiltshire. About the same time he separated himself from his tutor's surveillance: the latter taking up his temporary residence at Highwood-hill. Having engaged to spend a couple of months soon afterwards, with his pupil, at Fonthill, the latter remained there from the time of his return

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to England, in February or March 1781, until he became of age, on the 29th of September in that year, free, for the first time, from the shackles of an easy pupilage.

As if to avenge himself, though not yet quite of age, of his tutor's dislike to his devoting so much time to oriental literature, he studied Persian harder than ever, and read all kinds of works on Eastern lore.

It was on the 29th of September, 1781, that Beckford became his own master: the following letter is an account of the festivities upon this occasion. "It is dated October 1, 1781:"—

"At last, my dear A., the festive tumult and bustle at Fonthill have begun a little to subside, and I take the first quiet moment I have had since my arrival, to give you a short account of it; I say a short one, for I have not time to mention a thousand particulars, and that only just at the time they were going on. On my arrival, on Wednesday last, I found the house half full of company. There had been music, dancing, and feasting from the beginning of the week. But Thursday and Friday being the two

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principal days, I shall confine my account chiefly to them. On the former day we sat down to breakfast in the great arched Grecian Hall, not less than a hundred persons, at several long tables. This being finished, a concert succeeded: the company every moment increasing, till about five o'clock on Friday. Not less than three hundred, one-third of whom were nobility and persons of fashion, sat down to dinner; not to mention a great addition to the numbers in the servants of the company visiting, those of the family, and their friends, who dined, some before and some afterwards, not fewer by many than those upon whom they attended. At night there was an illumination, and a brilliant ball, followed by a supper at one in the morning; at which the guests were not fewer than they had been at dinner. The company danced, and played at cards after supper, and the festivity was kept up till daylight. Having slept a few hours, we all met again at breakfast, and that was scarcely over, before the whole park, woods, and plantations, were filled with country people, flocking from the town of Hindon and the surrounding villages. By the afternoon there could

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not be less that ten or twelve thousand assembled. On an extensive lawn before this noble house, there were erected three long booths. In one of them dined Mr. Beckford's Wiltshire tenants, with their sons, about two hundred persons. In the other two booths were entertained, in the same manner, the people of the town of Hindon, a little borough in the neighbourhood, in Mr. Beckford's parliamentary interest. These might amount men, women, and children, to about a thousand persons, and these as well as the tenants, had their band of music. A great quantity of strong beer was also given away to the populace. The company in the house dined at five o'clock the second day, about as many as on the day before. Dinner being over, another grand illumination succeeded. Some thousand lamps were beautifully disposed on the lawn, in the wood, and along the river; and three great bonfires lit up on a distant ground. The company having observed and enjoyed these sights, they were, after tea, entertained with magnificent fireworks, followed by a concert of vocal and instrumental music, in which was performed an Italian pastoral in honour of the day. There

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were, perhaps, more musicians of the first eminence there, than ever met together at our greatest oratorios. The evening concluded with a very splendid and crowded supper. The next day, Sunday, the best part of the company that stayed, assembled in a large room, where Dr. Lettice gave them a sermon. At dinner, the company was reduced to three tables. A concert was performed in the evening, and all who were present were invited to supper. On the following morning the company began to depart, about a score of Mr. Beckford's more particular friends and relatives only, continuing for some time; but the birthday celebrity was considered as finished. I feel as if I had written myself out of breath, and am glad to lay down my pen."

The expenses incurred upon the foregoing occasion were very considerable; but the property into which young Beckford came, after nursing during his minority, placed him in the position of one of the richest subjects in Europe. The amount, according to his own statement, consisted of nearly a million in ready money, and an income of a hundred thousand per annum.

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Mr. Beckford, now his own master, determined, a few months after he had thus become of age, to take a second tour on the Continent; and in the spring of 1782, prepared for his departure. He had been presented at court long before, and had figured in a ball at St. James's, with Miss North for his partner, early in that year. He sported on that occasion one of the most elegant *vis-à-vis* ever seen in the fashionable world; for such were the vehicles in which it was the custom for men of fashion to drive to the court in those times, many of them being of the most costly description, and Mr. Beckford's was noted for its costliness and good taste.

The romantic scenery he had seen on his tour with his tutor, had so strongly fixed itself in his mind, that he determined, being now his own master, to make a second excursion, and enjoy it without the control of any one, omitting no means of rendering it useful as well as agreeable. He prepared every convenience for his object that comfort demanded. He engaged an eminent artist, Mr. Cozens, to accompany him, also a physician, Dr. Errhert, and an eminent musician, a Mr. Burton. They filled three carriages,

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besides having led-horses and outriders. He invited his old tutor to be of the party; and with a considerable retinue, set out in May, 1782. He reached Cologne on the 28th of that month, where he made a very short stay at the Hotel Der Heilige Geist, and the next day rapidly took the road towards Italy, through the Tyrol, the country of picturesque wonders. Near Nasseriet he was delighted with the beauties of the country. He ran on foot into the woods, admiring the delicate foliage on all sides, while the artist Cozens drew the huts that were scattered about the landscape. He openly declared how fondly he felt attached to a pastoral life, and to scenes like those of the Tyrol, enamelled with the wild flowers in which he luxuriated. The traveller next drove furiously along the causeways by the Brenta, and stopped but a very little time anywhere until he once more saw the domes of Venice rising out of the waters; and the fresh breeze bore to his ears the toll of innumerable bells. Sadness came over him on entering the Great Canal, and recalling those solemn palaces, with their arcades and gloomy arches, beneath which he had once before often sat, the locality

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of strange adventures. Venice itself seemed deserted, most of the citizens being absent at their villas, on the Brenta. Here he went over all his previous walks; paid some visits; bathed in the Adriatic, and returned to the city, which appears to have been a favorite place, if not by climate, at least by agreeable associations. He began at one time to fancy St. Marks a mosque, and the neighbouring palaces a huge seraglio, fitted with arabesque saloons, embroidered sofas, and voluptuous Circassians.

He quitted Venice for Padua, where he remained, ten days. Before he left he determined to go to Mirabello, a house in the country, where Algarotti had lived, among the Euganean Hills, nine miles from Padua. The road was lovely, and the trees heavily laden with fruit. At the house where he was entertained a wild-looking little niece of the owner played the piano, and sang the voluptuous air of Bertoni's Armida. Coffee was served under branching lemon trees, on a terrace commanding a boundless scene; seas of corn and vine, and shrubby hillocks arising like islands out of the ocean of verdure.

Rome, imperial Rome was now revisited for a

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week; and the arch of Titus, the Coliseo, and the Capitol. But a rinfresco after the close and dull fancies of Rome was studiously avoided. At night the Cupola of St. Peter was bright with twinkling illuminations.

The genius of Mr. Beckford thus early shunned pageantry. He moved off from the rejoicings to the Negroni garden, "to find that his soul desired," namely, thickets of jasmine, and wild spots overgrown with hay; long-neglected cypress alleys, almost impassable, owing to their luxuriance of vegetation; antique fragments, vases, sarcophagi, and altars sacred to the manes, in such deep, shady recesses, as he "was certain the manes must love." The air was filled with murmurs of water trickling down basins of porphyry, and lost amid weeds and grasses.

Night once came on as he was looking over the dreary waste of the Campagna. He saw the unwholesome vapours rising like blue mists from the plains, and fancied the malaria affected him, feeling chills and terrors, but the whole of these sensations departed as if by magic, and he returned home as well as he ever was in his life.



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The breezes from the sea had restored him. He reached Naples on the 6th of July, 1782, and one day visited Portici with the first Lady Hamilton in an open chaise. They saw the Bosquetto, where no carriage except that of Sir William and of royalty itself was permitted to drive. Amongst wild bushes of ilex and myrtle stood graceful antique statues, and sometimes a fountain was discovered in the thicket, or some rude knoll arose, from whence the blue glittering bay disclosed its waters. Here Peruvian aloes, with white blossoms, scented like those of the magnolia, formed rich clusters. The King's Pagliaro was in a small garden, with hedges of luxurious jessamine, the branches of which were suffered to wander at their own sweet will. Mr. Beckford was greatly pleased at the neatness and simple character of the spot. In the middle of the room was a table covered with a Persian carpet; and at one end four niches with silken mattresses, where the king and his favourites reposed after dinner; at the other was a white marble basin. He then ascended a small staircase which led to a room, the windows of which domineered over a garden, not

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laid out in flourishing parterres, but divided into plots of fragrant herbs and flowers, with here and there a little marble table or basin of the purest water. All these were looked after with great care. There were lettuces growing there, and other vegetables as fresh and green as in an English garden.

In one part of the journey, before he reached Rome, Mr. Beckford and his party were taken for the Emperor of Austria, who was supposed to be paying an incognito visit to Rome. Even the cardinal legates and other important personages were thus under a deception. The numerous mobs encountered, and the curiosity testified was excessive. The mistake was very useful in expediting the means of travelling, but on the other hand gave a very imperial complexion to the inn reckonings. It was found a task of difficulty to undeceive the greater part of the hosts on the way, who were obstinately fond of adhering to their profitable error.

Upon his return home, in the latter part of the year 1782, it is most probable that he composed Vathek, because in the following year he married, and went abroad with his bride



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immediately, remaining for the most part in Switzerland until near the end of 1786. The only guide to this surmise is the fact that he stated to Mr. Redding* that he composed Vathek in the twenty-second year of his age. It is possible that in the winter of 1781 or in the first two or three months of the following year, before he went to the continent the second time, he might have completed this extraordinary story. It has been shewn that in October the rejoicings took place on his coming of age. His twenty-second year must have been between the end of September, 1781, and 1782, and he went abroad in the spring, and did not return to England until his twenty-second year had nearly run out its sand. He was at Fonthill for the most part in the autumn of 1781 and the commencement of 1782, and there can be little doubt that having flung off the rule of tutors and guardians, he expatiated freely in oriental lore, his favourite literature, which he studied furtively before he was of age, and the love of which remained with him to the last. The arbitrary power of the rulers of the east, and the obsequiousness of their

* See N. M. Magazine, vol. lxxi.

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subjects, seemed congenial to his notions of that magnificence, which, accompanying power, had delighted him in his early reading, and caused the remonstrances from his tutor, and cautions from the Earl of Chatham. Yet it is a proof of his powers of application thus almost clandestinely exerted, that he acquired a knowledge both of the Arabic and Persian sufficient to translate them freely. That this was the case was shown by his publication of a tale entitled "Al Raoui,"* a story only printed in 1799, but its translator informs us translated sixteen years before, which would date back to 1783, about the time of his marriage, and near the period to which allusion is now making—the period to which it more properly belongs.

The tale of Al Raoui it is probable was an attempt to try his skill in eastern translation, a sort of essay with his wings before he adventured upon a higher flight in Vathek. On this account, and still more on that of some verses contained in the same volume, which plainly

* The Story of Al Raoui, a tale from the Arabic. London, printed by Whittingham. M. C. Geisweild, Pall Mall, and sold by Robinsons, 1799.

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allude to the conjugal state in which he was about to enter, written in the fashionable style of poetry in those days, it seems doubly suitable to introduce the work at the date at which we have the author's authority for fixing both the translation of the tale and the composition of the verses.

This little work, comprizing only about sixty pages of letter-press, is inscribed to a Mrs. Cuthbert verbatim as follows:

"My dear Madam,—It is usual with the Easterns to retain an attendant, for the sake of amusing them with ingenious recitals; and Al Raoui, or the Taleteller, is the title they give him. If this story of the Emir's, an adept in his art, can afford you any amusement, it will be highly gratifying to the Translator."

A preface followed this dedication, which shows that the translation was made about the time its author wrote Vathek — namely, in 1782-3. It may not be uninteresting, therefore, to give it as it stands in the little volume where it appeared, the reader again bearing in mind that it was not published until sixteen years after Vathek.

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"In the preface to the History of Vathek, a collection of Tales is mentioned, of which this story is one. It was translated above sixteen years since, and still would have remained in oblivion, but for the notice of a MS. possessed by Captain Scott, which occurs in Major Ouseley's very curious collections. The contents of a tale, as there expressed, suggested the persuasion of its identity with this; or, at least, of its being very similar to it: for, of the Arabian Nights, it deserves to be remarked, that no two transcripts are found to be the same. Indeed, it would be strange if they were; for, setting aside design in the person reciting them, each tale in recital must, more or less, vary.

"If Captain Scott, who is pre-eminently qualified to render them justice, could be induced to translate his own collection, it is impossible to say how great an obligation he, by it, would confer on the public.

"Mr. Browne, in his Travels in Africa, Egypt, and Asia, just published, mentions a circumstance which, as illustrating a remark in the following story, is for that reason subjoined.

"'When a firmân, or mandate, is received in

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Egypt from Constantinople, the beys are summoned to the castle to hear the commands of the Porte. Those who attend, as soon as the reading is finished, answer, as is usual, *Esmana wa taâna*—we have heard, and we obey.'

"Since the foregoing preface was sent to the press, it is found that Captain Scott has undertaken the translation of his MS.; and that the original Arabic of this tale will be inserted from it in Major Ouseley's collections."

Thus far proceeds the introduction to the translation, which is printed in Mr. Beckford's volume both in English and German. Why it should appear in the latter tongue is not accounted for, unless the translations were both made by Mr. Beckford, which is likely enough to have been the case. The German is the exact counterpart of the English, with the dedication to Mrs. Cuthbert verbatim. Al Raoui has been thus connected with Vathek by its translator, and is almost unknown to the public, whom it will not fail to interest, perfectly simple as it is.

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## THE STORY OF AL RAOUI.

"THERE was formerly an Emir of Grand Cairo, whose company was more sought for his genius than his rank. One day, being very sad, he turned to an attendant, and said, 'My heart is dejected, and I know not the cause; relate to me some story to dissipate my grief.' Al Raoui, with whom hearing was obedience, replied: 'The great deem stories an antidote to chagrin; if you will allow me, I will tell my own.'

"In the days of my youth, I became enamoured of a beautiful damsel, who, with symmetry of features, had a skin pure as snow. She dwelt with her father and mother, and I, only to behold her, often passed by their door. Going thither one day, as was my custom, and finding no one within, I asked of their neighbours whither they were gone? It was told me they had changed their habitation, and were departed to dwell in the Valley of Camels. This greatly afflicted my heart. Not being able to live any longer without her, I relinquished my all to seek her abode. That evening I saddled my

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camel, girded on my sabre, mounted the beast, and set forth.

"The night was dark, the road difficult, and perplexed by precipices and torrents. To increase my distress, I was surrounded by the howlings of the desert. Notwithstanding, I blessed God for whatever might occur, and went on as before. At length, drooping with fatigue, drowsiness oppressed me; and, subdued by its power, I dozed as I rode. Whilst thus slumbering, my camel went astray; but, proceeding slowly, I did not awake till my forehead was stricken by the branch of a tree. As day was beginning to dawn, I discerned by the faint glimmering that I had wandered widely from my way. 'We cannot go against God's will!' said I, to myself; 'we must be content with whatever may happen!' Reasoning in this manner, I turned my eyes on all sides, and beheld pleasant gardens divided by streams, and birds that, incited by the beams of the morning, harmoniously blended their sweetest songs. Instantly alighting, I took my camel by the bridle, and walked onward, till I entered the land of Alfla.

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"Having thus recovered spirits, I remounted my beast, and not knowing whither I was come, entirely resigned her to the guidance of God. After crossing a delightful region, I found myself again on a wild. Then, I beheld a magnificent tent, whose awnings, of dazzling white, were waved by the breath of the morning, and, at glimpses, discovered the splendour within. Goats and sheep were pasturing round; a camel and horse stood near at their picket, but no human creature appeared. 'This is very strange!' said I to myself. At length, approaching, I called: 'Who is there?—doth not some good Mussulman inhabit this tent? Would he point out his way to a traveller bewildered?' Immediately came forth a youth, beautiful as the moon when leaving a cloud, she stoops from beneath it, into the clear blue sky. His dress gave a grace to his noble appearance. He saluted me with the accents of gentleness, and said: 'Brother Arab, you seem to have erred from your road?' I answered that I had, and trust you will guide me. 'Brother,' said he, 'the tracks here are imperfect, it now raineth, the night will be dark, and in this re-

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gion are many wild beasts; alight, rest yourself with me, and to-morrow I will point out your way.' At these words I dismounted. Tying up my camel, he gave her some provender, and ushered me into his tent. When there seated, he left me, and departed in search of a sheep. Having killed and prepared it with savoury herbs, we placed ourselves at his table. The young man, during this repast, ceased not to sigh and weep. I divined that from love proceeded his tears; because, myself, being conscious of love, I judged he must love vehemently, for one knows not what honey is till we taste it. I wished to learn from him the state of his heart, but feared to appear indiscreet.

" When we had sufficiently eaten, he brought out, in a golden canteen, two bottles of crystal, one with musked rose-water, the other with wine; and a napkin of silk, bordered with gold. I washed my hands, admiring the magnificence and taste that my host had displayed. We then conversed for a while; after which, he introduced me to the interior of his tent, shewed me a rich mattrass of green silk, furnished with curtains of the same colour, and retired, wishing

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me refreshment from slumber. I undressed myself, and sunk at once into sleep. Never did I enjoy a more tranquil repose. The imagination possessed by what I had seen, and my soul soothed by the hospitality and deportment of my host, presented to me dreams of pleasantness and peace. After some hours of rest, I was awakened by a voice, more melodious than a lute. Softly drawing back the curtain, I discovered with mine host a young woman, lovely as the chief of the Houries. After a moment, I heard much whispering. Methought, at first, the beauty I saw was a daughter of the Genii in love with this youth, and sequestered here to enjoy him; for her look cast a radiance, like that of the sun, upon every object around: but I soon found her no other than a daughter of Arabia.

"Seeing them hand in hand as they entered, I easily perceived they were lovers, and could not refrain from blessing their lot. Immediately closing the curtains, I reposed my head on the pillow, and again yielded to sleep. In the morning, having put on my clothes, after ablution and prayer, I went to mine host. We

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broke our fast together, but I asked no question of what I had seen. When our meal was ended, I said: 'Now, hope I, your kindness will shew me my way; it will be a favour conferred upon all that are passed.' 'Know,' replied he, 'it is a custom with the Arabs to lengthen their visits to the end of three days: moreover, your company is acceptable to me, and I shall rejoice if it please you to stay.' Finding myself constrained to fulfil his desire, I tarried with mine host till the fourth day came, and saw each night the damsel return. At the end of this time, I forbore no longer to ask him who he might be? He replied, 'I am one of the tribe of Beni Azra.' He then told me his name, the name of his father, and his father's brethren. On hearing these names, I knew him to be the son of my uncle, of the great tribe of Beni Azra. Of this I apprised him; and further inquired: 'Why, my kinsman, hast thou forsaken thy illustrious house to dwell alone in this desert?' No sooner had I spoken these words than he answered: 'I came, my cousin, to dwell in this desert, it being the abode of her whom I love. I am enamoured of the

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daughter of my uncle, the second brother of my father; I sought her at his hands, but he denied my request, and betrothed her forthwith to another, our kinsman, who, having gone in to her, led her away to the place where he himself dwells. For the space of a year I was not myself, and being unable to live from her sight, I abandoned all to come hither. She whom my soul loveth abides at the foot of yonder mountain, and every evening returns to converse for an hour with me. It is for this comfort that here I remain, and trust, by God's favour, all will be well.' 'Then,' said I, 'when she shall come this evening, thou wilt seat her on my camel, take what thou hast which is precious, and go together with me; the foot of my beast is so fleet that, before the day can dawn, we shall be far removed from this place. Then wilt thou enjoy, without any to hinder, the solace of abiding with her whom thou lovest; and thou shalt be free to choose the abode of thine eyes; for the land of God is very wide: I also will help thee, to the utmost of my power.' This proposal pleased him well. He embraced it with a look of delight. We waited

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patiently till evening should come, to hear what the damsel would say.

"When twilight drew on, we repaired to the door, earnestly expecting to see her approach. Each air seemed to bring the tread of her step. Her perfume he tried to inhale from the breeze. After anxiously waiting a long time in vain, 'My kinsman,' he cried, in a faltering voice, 'some misfortune most surely hath beset her on the way; abide my return, I will go forth to see.' On saying this, he entered the tent, snatched up his sabre, and went. In the space of two hours I saw him come back, with a bundle pressed under his arm. His visage was covered with the paleness of death. Trembling and bewildered he hurried towards me, and, dropping what he brought, fell lifeless at my feet. After some time he appeared again to revive, but his faintness gave way to the bitterest anguish. At length in distraction he loudly exclaimed, 'A lion hath met, hath devoured my beloved!—lo! her robe, her veil, and her blood! Here is all of her now that remains!' Having thus spoken, he continued for an hour entranced and speechless, gazing

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on her vestments. Then, looking less wildly, he said, 'Remain! I am going, but soon shall return.'

"Within another hour he re-entered the tent, bearing in his hand the head of the lion. This casting on the ground, he asked me for water, and having washed off the gore, he kissed its mouth. His tears now gushed forth afresh, and beholding with stedfastness the object of horror, till then muffled up in a warp of her dress, he uttered a groan that cleft through my heart.

"I approached, he grasped my hand, and said, 'I conjure thee, by the love of our kinswoman—by the friendship we have mutually sworn—to keep this adventure undivulged to our kin; let it not depart from thy lips. May the memory of my misfortune, as well as my felicity—so short in duration—be for ever buried in oblivion. I shall soon be no more. When I am dead, wash me, put on me the robe of my beloved, and inter me with her remains, in the door of this tent. All it contains is thine. Mayest thou enjoy it more happily than I!' At these words he retired to the inmost apart-



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ment: in another hour coming forth, he sunk upon the earth, compressed my hands, and expired.

"Amazed at the sight, I at first wished for death, but soon recollected the injunctions he had given. Having washed, I interred him, according to his will, and tarried three days to lament by his grave. Then, full of affliction from this woful event, instead of proceeding to the Valley of Camels, I returned to the place of my former abode, for the evil thus witnessed had healed me of love."

In his partiality for eastern manners and literature, amid a strong attachment for the classical schools of antiquity, something must be conceded to the splendour which the oriental imagery presents to an active imagination. Accustomed to airy dreams, and to give way to the illusions of fancy, there were ever present desires of a more extended grasp, which efforts were continually made to accommodate to the every-day scenes of existence. The repeated wish to increase the possession of objects of art, is the desire akin to the ambition for raising a fortune or making a high reputation. It is an

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ambition more refined than those which actuate the mass of mankind, but it has still the same origin. Man thinks he must be blest in something, and in that to which his mind has a partiality before everything else. He only hopes the more because he hopes in vain. It is probable that Mr. Beckford never fully realized any one of the objects of his ambition. His collections of engravings, for example, were exceedingly fine; but now and then accident discovered a better copy here and there, and that which was good yesterday was put by to-day for what was better. His advance this way was continual. It was the same with his extensive reading. He used to say that every day he learned something new; that when he regarded it, he was tempted to ask himself *cui bono*, that life was a stinted space in which to carry out but a very little of what man acquired. He could not help reading and reflecting, while conscious of the impossibility of putting what he acquired to the smallest practical benefit. Still he would get an increase of knowledge, because its acquirement was a substantial enjoyment.



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At the time young Beckford was thus busy in studying Oriental literature, he did not neglect the art of making verses. At that period, and for a score of years afterwards, Strephons and Delias, shepherds and groves, purling streams and perfumed zephyrs, were the materials of the young poet's song. The following are some of his youthful metrical productions, published in the same volume as the translation to which allusion has just been made, and quite in the strain of the portion of the eighteenth century between Goldsmith and Cowper. The author stated that,

"The verses which follow were long ago printed, but with more defects than their own. They have here been annexed for the sake of correcting them."

If memory does not fail the present writer, they originally appeared either in the "Gentleman's" or "Universal" Magazine, between 1775 and 1780, which alludes to the words, "long ago printed." The first lines were simply inscribed—

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## VERSES.

By the side of the stream that strays through the grove,
I met in a ramble the blithe God of Love;
His bow o'er his shoulder was carelessly tied,
His quiver in negligence clank'd at his side.
A grasp-full of arrows he held to my view,
Each wing'd with a feather that differ'd in hue.
"This fledged from the eagle," he smiling begun,
I aim at the heart that no danger will shun;
"And this from the peacock, all gaudy array'd,
The breast of Sir Fopling is sure to invade;
When I aim at the prattler, who talks void of wit,
My shaft in the plume of a parrot will hit;
And when I've a mind that the jealous should smart,
An owl-feathered arrow will pierce through his heart.
For the youth in whom truth and fondness reside,
From the breast of a dove my dart is supplied;
This I value the most: and this 'twas, I found,
From you, O my Delia, that gave me the wound."

## CONJUGAL LOVE—AN ELEGY.

If aught of bliss sincere hath e'er been given,
To those who dwell so far beneath the skies;
That bliss, which makes on earth a present heaven,
Can only from the purest passions rise.

Say, do not storms uproot the lofty oak,
That crowns with majesty the mountain's brow;
While lowly shrubs escape the thunder's stroke,
And wave their verdure in the vale below?

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Say, does that soil whose bosom gold contains,
From its rich lap in more profusion throw,
Of sweeter flowers than scent unpillag'd plains,
Where baneful gold hath ne'er been taught to glow?

Say, does that haughty bird whose gaudy train
Attracts the full gaze of the splendid day,
Pour from the heart so soothing, sweet a strain,
As modest Philomela's melting lay?

Ambition, avarice, and the pomp of pride,
Seductive oft, may lure unheedful eyes,
But ne'er can tempt my right-on foot aside;
These who pursue, will ne'er obtain the prize.

Remote from envy, far from madding strife,
I nothing want, of competence possessed;
Amid the scenes of mild domestic life,
I'll seek, by blessing others, to be blessed.

Be mine the first, the most endearing care,
That nought may e'er disturb my Delia's joy;
Whate'er to her could cause the lightest fear,
Would instant all my happiness destroy.

For her I'd wake even at the glimpse of dawn,
And blithesome at the heavy plough would toil;
Anticipating, ere my wished return,
The ready welcome of an heart-felt smile.

When Autumn o'er our fields her produce spreads,
And vying reapers bend in adverse rows;
With pleasure she the yellow landscape treads,
And wipes the dews of labour from their brows.

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Should sickness e'er molest my menial train,
With lenient hand she'd every grief assuage;
Her sympathy would draw the sting of pain,
Revive the young, and charm e'en wayward age.

Should some kind friend frequent our humble shed,
With studious ease she'd grace the frugal board,
Before our guest her rural treasures spread,
Nor boast a treat but what our grounds afford.

Should some bewildered traveller as he strays,
Protection seek beneath our sheltering roof,
For him we'll make the cheerful hearth to blaze,
Of hospitality the promptest proof.

The hallowed raptures of the bridal bed,
When first entranced we sealed our mutual vow,
Transport less poignant through the bosom sped
Than yields the fond delight that fills us now.

An, speak, my Delia, thy overflowing heart,
When cradled in thine arms the tender boy
With filial smile doth first begin t'impart,
He knows his mother, source of al his joy.

Or when around my knees the infant band,
In clambering contest seek the envied kiss;
Impetuous, each extends the pleading hand,
T' assert his claim, and all obtain the bliss.

While we, in sportive contest, strive to trace,
In which each parent's semblance most prevails,
Their father's vigour, and thy winning grace,
In varied mixture o'er each feature steals.

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Oft when the little tongues but ill can tell
The sprightly fancies in their brain that rise;
With keen attention thou explain'st them well,
And readest the meaning in their speaking eyes.

"Delightful task the tender thought to rear,
To teach the young idea how to shoot!"
To prune each impulse that a vice might bear,
And tend with fostering hand the ripening fruit.

When tottering lambkins from the searching air,
Unable yet the fresh world to sustain,
Demand the fold, be theirs the tender care,
Nor will she hear the sufferers bleat in vain.

When timid red-breast, pinch'd by taming cold,
Enters our friendly cot in search of food,
Be their's the joy to make the stranger bold,
And learn the luxury of doing good.

Thus with their opening minds our pleasures spread,
While they in all that's just and generous thrive,
Till autumn's mellowing hour our days o'ershade,
Then in our scions we'll again revive.

Fond memory then shall make us feel anew
Those happy hours when first you touched my heart;
Recall each dear idea to our view,
When you that wounded, smiling eased the smart.

Then in my boys some lovely maid I'll woo,
Whose virtues and whose form resemble thine;
While in your girls shall pay their court to you,
Some honest youth, whose bosom glows like mine.

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And when at length draws on the gloom of death,
We'll praise our God for all his blessings given;
In gentle slumber yield our easy breath,
And, both transported, wake to bliss in heaven!

These lines are not equal in poetical merit to the prose of the "Memoirs of Extraordinary Painters," much less to that of Vathek; but to write well in prose and in verse are different gifts. At the opening of manhood, the dreams of sexual affection naturally occupy the mind; and in men of genius, and of no genius at all, break forth in rhyme. Young Beckford's verses speak of a heart in the right place, and if they are not such as would draw attention at present, for poetical merit, still less would the subject attract. It must be recollected that nearly four-score years have passed away since they were composed; that the present taste is not directed towards the simple and natural, but towards the complex, indefinite, and incomprehensible in poetry. Lucid meaning and simplicity of subject were once prevalent.

In the volume from which the above was extracted, there occurs only one other piece of poetry, purporting to be written at the close of winter,

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to a friend just leaving a favourite retirement, previous to settling abroad."

It is probable the title was given to conceal the self reference. There is the author's love of country life and the romantic in every line; his fondness for nature, and the effect of its images upon his fancy. In all events the lines record his close observation of rural scenes and objects, at a time when most young men of fortune and consideration, hold such things in very low estimation, compared with "fandango, race, and route." They are as follow:—

"Ere yet your footsteps quit the place
Your presence long hath deigned to grace,
With softening eye and heart deplore
The conscious scenes your own no more.

When vernal clouds their influence shower,
Expand the bud, and rear the flower,
Who to yon leafy grove will come,
Where the rath primrose loves to bloom,
And fondly seek, with heedful tread,
The forward flowrets' downy head?
Or, when the violet leaves the ground,
Scent the pure perfume breathing round;
The garden tribes that gladlier grew,
While cherished by your fostering view,
No more disclose their wonted hues,
No more their wonted sweets diffuse!

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Who first will spy the swallows' wing?
Or hear the cuckoo greet the spring?
Unmark'd shall then the assiduous dove
With ruffling plumage urge his love;
Unnoted, though in lengthened strain,
The bashful nightingale complain!
O'er the wide heath who then delight,
Led by the lapwing's devious flight,
To see her run, and hear her cry,
Most clamorous with least danger nigh!

Who, sauntering oft, will listless stay,
When rustics spread the unwithered hay,
And o'er the field survey askance
The wavy vapour-quivering dance;
Or, sunk supine, with musing eye,
List to the hum of noonday fly?
Or watch the bee from bell to bell,
Where sheltered lilies edge the dell!
Or, mid the sultry heat inclined,
Beneath the poplar woo the wind;
While to the latest air that strays,
Each leaf its hoary side displays.

Who drawn by nature's varying face,
O'er heaven the gathering tempest trace
Or, in the rear of sunny rain,
Admire the wide bow's gorgeous train,
Till, blended, all its tints decay,
And the dimm'd vision fleets away,
In misty streams of ruddy glow,
That cast an amber shine below;

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And, melting into ether blue,
The freshened verdure gild anew.

Who now ascend the upland lawn,
When morning tines the kindling dawn,
To view the goss'mer pearl'd with dew,
That glistening shoots each mingling hue?
Or mark the clouds in liveries gay,
Precede the radiant orb of day?
Who, when his amplest course is run,
Wistful pursue the setting sun?
To common eyes he vainly shines;
Unheeded rises, or declines!

In vain with saffron light o'erspread,
Yon summit lifts its verdant head,
Defining clear each whitened cote,
And tuft of copse, to eye remote;
While down the sidelong steep, each oak,
Outbraving still the woodman's stroke,
Detains, athwart the impurpling haze,
A golden glance of westering rays.
The rook-loved groves, and grange between,
Dark hedge-row elms, with meadows green;
The grey church peeping through the trees;
Slopes waving corn, as wills the breeze;
The podding bean-field, striped with balks;
The hurdled sheepfold; hooftrod walks;
The road that winds aslant the down;
The yellow furze brake; fallow brown;
The windmill's scarcely circling vane;
The villagers' returning wain;
The orient window's crimson blaze,
Obtrusive flaring on the gaze;

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The eager heifer's echoing low,
Far from her calf compelled to go;
From topmost ash the throstle's lay,
Bidding farewell to parting day;
The dale's blue smokes, that curling rise;
The toil-free hind that homeward hies;
The stilly hum from glimmering wood;
The lulling lapse of distant flood;
The whitening mist that widening spreads,
As winds the brook adown the meads;
The plank and rail that bridge the stream;
The rising full moon's umbered gleam,
'Twixt severing clouds that, richly dight,
Let gradual forth her brightening light;
No more the onward foot beguile,
Where pollards rude protect the stile.

Whose look now scans the dusky sphere,
To note succeeding stars appear;
Who now the flushing dawn descries,
That upward streams o'er northern skies?
Or the wan meteor's lurid light,
That, headlong trailing, mocks the sight?
'Mid the lush grass, who now require,
The glow-worm's ineffectual fire?
Or catch the bells from distant vale,
That load by fits the freshening gale,
Till, flurried from her ivied spray,
The moping owl re-wing her way?

When autumn sere the copse invades,
No more you haunt the woodland glades,

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To eye the change from bough to bough,
Or eddying leaf descending slow;
That, lighting near her calm retreat,
Prompts the shy hare to shift her seat;
Or peering squirrel nimbly glean,
Each nest that hung before unseen;
Or flitting down from thistle born,
Or glossy haw that crowds the thorn,
Whence oft in saws observers old
Portend the length of winter's cold!

Waked by the flail's redoubling sound,
When spangling hoar-frost crisps the ground,
No more forego bewildering sleep,
To climb with health yon airy steep!
When deepening snows oppress the plain,
The birds no more their boon obtain;
The red-breast hovering round your doors,
No more the stated mess implores!
Where all that needed found relief,
No tearful eye laments their grief;
No lenient hand dispels their pain,
Fainting they sue, yet sue in vain.

But though the scenes you now deplore,
With heart and eye be yours no more;
Though now each long-known object seem
Unreal as the morning's dream;
Yet still with retrospective glance,
Or rapt in some poetic trance,
At will, may every charm renew,
Each smiling prospect still review;

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Through memory's power, and fancy's aid,
The pictured phantoms ne'er shall fade.
And, oh! where'er your footsteps roam,
Where'er you fix your future home,
May joys attending crown the past,
And heaven's best mansion be your last!"

The rural images and allusions in these lines show further his early observations of nature, and his strong attachment to what had been closely and well noted in the morning of life, and not only noted but felt. The author being on the eve of taking his departure for Switzerland, renders it probable that these lines were a record of his feelings at the moment. The romantic South strongly attached him to its scenery, as was plainly shewn after his marriage. Such objects as he here depicts were the reverse of those which his friends desired, when they hoped to see him cut a great political figure in the world. On the other hand, he always openly avowed his preference for study. His fitting pursuits were literature and art, in place of wading through the mud of political tergiversation and intrigue. Even while he sat in parliament he confessed a distaste for its forma-

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lities, as well as an absence of all political ambition. He had not the bold effrontery to bandy words with opponents whom in his heart he might despise; neither could he out-brazen or cajole others with the dexterity of a leading man in office. He was of an uncompromising disposition; too rigid ever to yield in what he thought right. His mind was too highly cultivated. He cut no figure in parliament while he sat there. To be under the control of those in whom he felt no interest, if he did not despise them with his fiery temper, and to sacrifice independent action, did not suit him. From his youth nature and study had been his choice in a small circle of intelligent persons. His innate pride was greater than that of most other men, he was more susceptible of an affront, and less willing to expose himself to it with a corresponding make-weight to his own satisfaction. These things he must have encountered by entering the field of politics, and from them, besides being prompted by his natural hauteur, he shrunk. In this sense, indeed, he was a shy man, one touched with *mauvaise honte*. He had too much intellect and genius, and not

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craft enough, nor a front sufficiently unblushing to adapt him to public life, being incapable of justifying everything by an equivocal or crooked policy.



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## CHAPTER VII.

HISTORY OF CALIPH VATHEK—AUTHOR'S REMARKS REGARDING ITS DIFFERENT EDITIONS—MACHINERY OF—NOTICES REGARDING—MARRIAGE—RESIDENCE AT THE CHATEAU DE LA TOUR—DEATH OF LADY MARGARET—FONTHILL.

In the year 1783, Mr. Beckford's marriage taking place precludes the idea of the tale of Caliph Vathek being composed after that event. It may be clearly inferred from some of the foregoing verses, published in the volume in which Al Raoul appeared so many years afterwards, that he had his impending marriage in view at the time he composed them. Vathek was written at Fonthill, and if this youthful poetry does not come up to the mark of Vathek in merit, it must be recollected that his views were adapted to the fashion of the day in which

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the verses were written ; a fashion at the present moment that would be thought puerile, and out of keeping. The only authentic account directly from the author regarding this splendid and beautiful tale, was made by himself to Mr. Redding, at Lansdown, in 1835, which the latter recorded as follows :

" You will hardly credit how closely I was able to apply myself to study when I was young. I wrote Vathek when I was twenty-two years old. I wrote it at one sitting, and in French. It cost me three days and two nights of hard labour. I never took my clothes off the whole time. This severe application made me very ill."

" Your mind must indeed have been an ardent one—deeply imbued, too, with the literature of the East."

" I had revelled in that kind of reading for some time. I preferred it to the classics of Greece and Rome. I began it of myself as a relief from the dryness of my other studies. I was a much better Latin than Greek scholar. The Latin and Greek were set tasks ; the Persian I began of my own accord."



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"Byron praised the Hall of Eblis for its sublimity."

"Yes, Byron complimented me upon the tale more than once."

"I never read any description resembling that of the Hall of Eblis, in Eastern fiction, through translation, of course, for I do not understand any Oriental language."

"You would hardly find any thing of the kind in Eastern description. It was the creation of my own fancy. Old Fonthill house had one of the largest halls in the kingdom, lofty, and loud echoing, whilst numerous doors led from it into different parts of the building, through dim, long, winding passages. It was from that I formed my imaginary hall—the Hall of Eblis being generated out of that in my own house. Imagination coloured, magnified, and invested it with the Oriental character. All the females mentioned in Vathek, were portraits of those in the domestic establishment at Old Fonthill, their imaginary good or ill qualities exaggerated to suit my purpose."

"Sir Walter Scott copied most of his characters and landscape descriptions from what had a real existence."

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"And I did something of the same kind in Vathek. It was my own impulse led me to it. I had to elevate, exaggerate, orientalize every thing. I was soaring in my young fancy upon the Arabian bird roc, among genii and enchantments, not moving among men. I have a French edition of Vathek just printed; pray accept a copy."

Mr. Redding continued. "The Hall of Eblis is equalled, if not surpassed, in description, by the sublime description of the descent thither; the rapidity of the steps, their continued acceleration until the sensation was that of falling from a precipice."

"I forget; have the goodness to shew me the passage."

"Comme ils se hâtaient avec une ardente impatience, leur pas s'accelérènt à un point, qu'ils semblaient tomber rapidement dans un precipice, plutôt que marcher."

"It did not strike me before," said Mr. Beckford, "that the description is obscure, as it affects the cause of the acceleration. There is sublimity in mystery, they say, so it is not bad. Sir William Ouseley told me long ago

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that what I have called the 'watch-towers,' built upon the terrace of the palace of Istakar, were, in reality, columns, now, or recently, in existence. A column would have been more appropriately consecrated to a star than a watch-tower."

He said, in answer to a query to that effect, that the three episodes of Vathek were not all still in existence—the histories of Alasi and Friouz, of Prince Barkiarokh, of Kalilah and Zulkais, who were shut up in the palace of subterranean fire. He had destroyed one of the MSS. as too wild, but the others might some day see the light. "You were wrong," he added, "in calling Vathek my first literary performance. You suppose, also, that I translated it from the French original. My youthful 'Memoirs of Extraordinary Painters' was my first publication. The party who was the first translator of Vathek into English I never knew; it was tolerably well done."

Mr. Redding remarked, that the translation omitted some of the author's quaintness; but Mr. Beckford thought, as a whole, it did him justice. It did not appear that any plan or

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sketch of the story had been previously made, but that the whole had been thrown off *currente calamo.*

Vathek first appeared in print in 1784, the second year after it was written; and editions were published both in Paris and Lausanne, the latter in 1787. The preface of the French edition was different from that of the English. This was accounted for in the first French edition of the author in a few lines in the way of preface.

1786

" L'ouvrage que nous presentons au public a été composé en François par M. Beckford. L'indiscretion d'un homme de lettres, à qui le manuscrit avoit été confié il y a trois ans, en a fait connoître la traduction Anglaise avant la publication de l'original. Le traducteur a même pris sur lui d'avances dans sa preface que Vathek étoit traduit de l'Arabe. L'auteur s'inscrit en faux contre cette assertion, et s'engager à ne point en imposes au Public d'autres ouvrages de ce genre qu'il se propose de faire connoître; il les puisera dans la collection precieuse des manuscrits Orientaux laisses par feu M. Wortley Montague, et dont les originaux se

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trouvent à Londres, chez M. Palmer, regisseur du Duc de Bedford."

A writer in the Gentleman's Magazine suspecting that the individual, the "homme de lettres" alluded to above, was Dr. Samuel Henley, accused him of translating the Arabian tale of Vathek, in order to show his learning by writing voluminous notes to it. Dr. Henley was afterwards principal of Hertford College. Mr. Beckford stated to Mr. Redding that he did not know the individual who made the surreptitious translation from the French copy, as from an unpublished and original MS., but that as regarded the translation itself he had no fault to find with it.

The last edition of Vathek in French was published by Bentley in 1834, and carried the following preface from the author.

"Les éditions de Paris et de Lausanne, étant devennes extrêmement rares, j'ai consenti enfin à ce que l'on republiât à Londres ce petit ouvrage tel que je l'ai composé.

"La traduction, comme on sait, a paru avant l'original; il est fort aisé de croire que ce n'était pas mon intention; des circonstances, peu in-

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térressantes pour le public, en ont été la cause.

"J'ai preparé quelques Episodes; ils sont indiqués à la page 200, comme faisant suite a Vathek; peut être paraîtront-ils un jour.—W. BECKFORD."

There was an English edition of Vathek, and the fourth, revised and corrected by the author, published by Clarke, New Bond Street, 1823. Bentley published one subsequently in 1834, in conjunction with the Castle of Otranto and the Bravo of Venice—rather an odd medley.

It was not easy to conjecture from whence Mr. Beckford took the machinery of this extraordinary story. It has been seen that in regard to the characters, he drew them from exaggerated pictures of his own household. The supernatural beings in the tale are not those of the Arabian Nights alone, that is they are not purely drawn from those of the Arabian East, but are mingled with some which are more Indian than Arabian, all blended to form the supernatural portions of the tale. The source of Mr. Beckford's machinery being clearly not what could be drawn from the Arabian Nights

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alone, they would some of them be thought barbarisms at Mecca, and names and expressions evidently connected with India, led to the belief that Mr. Beckford had recourse to tongues not so pure as the Arabic of the Koran for filling up the characters in his tale. Singularly enough, Mr. Redding says in his "Recollections," recently published, that when the Strawberry Hill sale commenced, Mr. Beckford gave an agent a commission to purchase a lot not very valuable, but which he wanted most particularly. Happening to possess an imperfect copy of the same book, Mr. R. says, "I referred to it, and had no longer any doubt that in his youth that work had furnished him with a machinery different from that in the Arabian Nights, and that there was nothing in Vathek which its author might not have found there in relation to that machinery. This book is entitled, "Abdallah, les adventures de fils de Hanif, envoye par le Sultan des Indes a la decouverte de l'Isle de Borico, ou est la Fontaine merveilleuse, dont l'eau fait rejeunir. Paris, 1723. London, translated, 1730, Worrall, Fleet Street." It is said to be taken from an Arabic manuscript

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found in Batavia. The time in which the events of the history occur, is the reign of Chah-Jehan. The Hindoo mythology is commingled in it with that of the Arabs. Genius and Ginne, the Divs and Peris, the mountain Kaf, and the empire of Ginnistan, in fact, Indian and Mahommedan notions intermingled, seemed to explain the source which, from happening to be in the hands of young Beckford at the moment, supplied the images and terms which were requisite in order to render the Eastern illusion in Vathek complete. The two kinds of Genii called Dives, or Divs and Peris, masculine, and Perises and Dives, feminine, according to the Mahommedan doctors, inhabited the earth before the creation of Adam. Lutfallah, Gian's sword, Rouschen, Dazzial and his ass, and similar names or objects on which elaborate notes have been written, may all be found in the work in question. This work Mr. Beckford described to his agent as of no great value in itself, but that he wished to have possession of it, no doubt in the recollection that its mythological or fairy-land fable had been of use to him by furnishing hints and materials to set off his wonderful

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eastern tale in his youthful days. The sketch of Dazzial is in the style of Mr. Beckford: "I had now felt no sign of fear, and was even flattering myself that my heart was not susceptible of it, when I beheld before me amid the clouds, a huge black giant, armed with a fiery javelin, waiting to pierce me. Though his complexion was black, his beard and all the other hairs of his body were white. He had but one eye and one eyelid, but it sparkled like a comet, and gave a most terrible look. This proved to be Dazzial himself." "I lament," says Mr. Redding, "I knew nothing of this book in Mr. Beckford's lifetime."

With such an affluence of imagination as Mr. Beckford possessed by nature, with his extensive reading on eastern subjects, and a masterly mode of applying what he desired to the circumstances of the moment, the production of Vathek may be readily accounted for, without those far-fetched conjectures upon the subject, which consume time to no satisfactory purpose. The merit of the writing, and much of the machinery, belong to the author, as well as the combination of all the parts. A wonderful

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tale was thus produced, which, to borrow the language of a great poet as to its character, "for correctness of costume, beauty of description, and power of imagination, far surpasses all European imitations. As an eastern tale, even Rasselas must bow before it; his happy valley will not bear a comparison with the 'Hall of Eblis.'" Such was Byron's opinion of this superb story.

An ingenious and clever writer, Mr. John Edmund Reade, who resided at Bath, though it is uncertain whether he had been one of the few who overcame the inaccessibility of "Lansdown Bagdad," as its owner sometimes jestingly called it, wrote the following just remarks upon Vathek.

"A thousand novels, often by eminent hands, are read, acknowledged for the moment, and forgotten—and why? because they are but the same copies, however varied, from the great text book of Human Nature—open to the investigation of all men, which all who run may read, which all who pause on may understand. If a novelist copy faithfully, he is called a true writer; if coarsely, or superficially, a caricaturist (and great names are found among this class); if

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overstrained, he is false, and becomes, perhaps, a star of the Minerva press. Among each class of these writers there are vast distinctions. The greater part of them copy from the scenes of every-day life, from its 'moving accidents,' its common smiles and tears, such as Dickens, and others of the existing time; but when some great master-spirit rises, and throws off to the life such tremendous characters as John Balfour of Burley; or who, when referring to the age of chivalry, can animate with all the fiery energies of life and passion a Bois de Gilbert, we feel that the imagination is laid hold of—once and for ever.

"Still, even here, we submit that the works of the novelist class among the secondary order of intellect; he is rather a compounder and representer, than a creator—creation belongs to Genius alone. Such characters, indeed, as Burley, Meg Merrilies, Bois de Gilbert, Rebecca (a female character inferior to not one of Shakespeare's), approximate to creations, yet are not so; they are the highest copies of the highest order of characters, drawn or compounded from nature by a master-hand.

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"In our day Göthe was eminently a creator (we place Shakespeare as 'a star apart,' being the creator of all things), not in the characters of Faust or Margaret, though both are exquisitely pourtrayed, and with the most intimate knowledge of human nature, but he became a creator when on the Brocken with the witch-world around him, and Nature, no longer material, but feelingly alive—a conception which escaped the eyes of Shakspeare. Referring once more to the extraordinary tale of 'Vathek,' the commonest mind, seeing only the outside of the picture, recognizes an original; scenes which are felt to be the more perplexing, the mind having nothing to which it can refer for analogy. For example, the appearance of the voracious Indian, his inexplicable character, his rolling himself into a ball, thereby turning the palace and the whole city into an uproar, as if it were taken by storm—and the strange re-action that ensues—about all this there is a wild kind of ghastly mirth which, we repeat, is perplexing; the imagination is at fault, and knows not what to make of it — in other words, the fountain head of originality is attained.

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"Without further analysing 'Vathek,' we will only add, that the higher display of the author's genius is developed in the description of the ruins of Istakar by moonlight, the platform of the seven towers, each dedicated to a star. From this scene the mind is chained with a thrilling interest to the end. The descent to the Hall of Eblis—the fearful, yet truth-like looking penances there seen—the whirling round of the multitudes rendered by their own motion almost invisible — the fleshless Pre-Adamite kings—the Soliman whose wisdom is so familiar to us, and his startling warnings, while showing his heart enveloped in flames—all these extraordinary scenes seem to flash on the mind like revealments of truths, and are therefore infinitely more awakening than the reverential feeling which is called forth by the most staid and awful grandeurs of Milton.

"Full twenty years have rolled away since the writer of this notice has read 'Vathek' in the original French, yet is each page, almost each line, as fresh in his memory as if he had turned from it yesterday—such is the power of genius!

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"Finally, whatever may be the future fate of 'Vathek,' it will maintain its position among the most original efforts of human genius; the mind that conceived it could conceive anything."

Again Mr. Reade continues, "Lord Byron was the first who boldly stood forward to proclaim of 'Vathek,' that, 'as an Eastern tale, Rasselas must bow before it; the Happy Valley cannot sustain a comparison with the Hall of Eblis.' Great praise was this, over the cold and formal Rasselas, yet it fell certainly below the mark. The fallen angels on the burning lake of Milton fill the mind with all the impresses of sublimity, indistinctness, pain and terror; but the shapes are shadowy and undefinable, we have no human sympathies with them. In the Hall of Eblis, the figure of Soliman on his tomb, showing his heart enveloped in flame, and the impressive sentences he utters—the awful forms of the pre-adamite kings—the innumerable multitudes whirled round in eternal motion, each hand pointing to the heart on fire, leave an impression on the mind more human—more startling and awakening than any drawn from the Hell of Milton.'"



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The foregoing remarks are perfectly correct. Some other observations on Vathek it may not be irrelevant to insert here, from their having attracted Mr. Beckord's attention in a criticism on his later works. "Energy of style, affluence of imagination, skill in portraiture, and exact knowledge of oriental costume, are discovered in Vathek, while touches of irony, and a certain dry, Voltaireish humour are found developing themselves here and there in scenes with which they would at first sight appear incongruous. The acquaintance with the imagery, customs, and habits of the east, is perfect.

"The language of Vathek is of the plainest kind; that simplicity of expression has been adopted by the author which is the sole vehicle of sublimity. The style is evidence of a perfect command of language, while it is kept close to the model of the *simplex munditiis*, that is, managed with 'careless art.' The situations in Vathek, dependent upon impulses of the moment, upon caprices natural to denizens of the East; even passing impressions on their minds are wonderfully well conceived and painted. The fertility of imagination displayed is sur-

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prising, while nothing intrudes to alloy the verity of the illusion. The tale may be hunted through for a single slip out of keeping with the costume and character of the East. The dialogues have the same merit, and the unity is in every respect complete. To produce a tale of this kind is impossible, unless an author's mind be capable of a perfect abstraction for a considerable time from all but the work on which it was occupied, so as to steep itself in the subject to saturation. Not only is this true in relation to the principal points and characters, but it holds good with the more minute and less consequential. The fund of imagery and resources of fancy found in Vathek, convince the reader that the author has still further stores in reserve, an impression always favourable to an author. Proofs of this are discoverable in every page. The reserve of the description of the Hall of Eblis until the last scene, pregnant with imagery never surpassed in grandeur, reaches the apex of excellence at the part of the story where inferior writers are found to flag. What can be finer than the assemblage of the countless multitude of all nations, kindreds and



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tongues, wandering like erratic stars beneath a vault vast as that of the empyrean, arching over a limitless desert of desolated hopes, the sojourn of unblest feet, of burning hearts, of livid faces, of guilt never to be propitiated, of measureless agony, of cureless remorse, in the fellowship of unbounded hate! What a portrait, or rather, what a character is Carrathis! What unquenchable energy does she unite with revolting passions and monstrous vices—

'Linked with one virtue and a thousand crimes!'

that one virtue the love of her son, and the desire that he should be great. Carrathis reminds the reader of Lady Macbeth in her ambitious and cruel determination, but she joins to this the sorceress, alchymist, and goule. One is not sure, after all, whether her ambition be not for herself rather than Vathek; yet, at times, nature shews something of maternal feeling that sets the question at rest; again, when she exhibits her fright at his being in danger, we anew concede to her the solitary animal virtue of love of offspring. What horrible resources does Carrathis not call forth to contribute

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to the object of her invincible, indomitable ambition! She employs herself with demons and the invisible ministers of darkness. She wearies herself with incantations to raise Vathek to her crowning glory, the end for ever consecrating the means. She cannot hurry too fast to her doom, dragging with her the son, worthy of such a mother; for, though the 'fate predestinated' governs in the east, none there can foresee events any more than in Europe. The horrible labours of Carathis, and the supernatural instruments that obey her will, cannot disclose to her vision one hour of futurity, one glance down the steep of perdition over the brink of which she reels and totters. She hurries on, her tremendous energy never slumbering, never relaxing a sinew in perseverance. Vathek may forget his ambition in temporary debauchery; he may lose it for a moment in some fiercer desire; but Carathis—never. Her cares and toils are incessant—afrits, demons, genii, hell, she invokes for her object—all must contribute to work out Vathek's glory. 'Let me expire, provided he may reign on the throne of Soliman!' All the sacrifices to the Giaour, when

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they are found to avail little or nothing—sacrifices of the young, innocent, and beautiful—cause no remorse, passing unnoticed in the absorbing dream of her mighty ambition. When brought on the back of the horrible afrit to the dungeon of eternal woes—to the 'little square chamber' where she finds Vathek and Nourinohar, their doom for ever sealed—Carathis makes no note of it; she upbraids not her son, she can then only see the hallucination absorbing her entire soul: she is still undaunted. The curse of Vathek, who has glanced behind the veil, moves her not. The dome of Soliman is more to her than fear, mortal or immortal; she will enter it, and dare everything. The talismans shall be her's, despite her son's reproaches. He quails like Macbeth before a deed that the heart of a woman dares without misgiving. Carathis can brave the 'icy wind of death,' and face the infernal majesty of Eblis seated on his throne of fire, and not be unnerved. That which she desires for her son, and he will not dare, she will dare for him herself. If Vathek will not champion for a crown, she will gain it by her own daring—her own defiance of hell

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shall acquire it—she will grasp the talismans, if the grasp be bought with an immortality of torment, and a heart of consuming fire! The character of Carathis is unique; nothing more energetic, more fiercely determined has ever been sketched by any writer. It is wrought out as well as conceived with vividness, and fraught with that plenitude of gorgeousness in description, with which, as with voluptuousness, we associate everything oriental.

"Bababalouk is an original character of a different species. Dwarfs, eunuchs, and giants abound in oriental fiction; but the officiousness of Bababalouk, his self-conceit, hideousness of person, and devotion to the Caliph are attributes completely original. This dwarf is a sort of Sancho Panza and Caliban united, if such similitude might be imagined. Then we have the young and beautiful Nourinohar, with sense enough to prefer the man to the boy Gulchenrouz, who passes ages in a happy and innocent childhood, a sort of Psychean freshness of being. Nourinohar is a delicious female creation, right Oriental, as she should be. She lives but for the Caliph's love. Her sole hope is in his af-

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fection, and where she reposes hers. She cannot dream of a betrayal. Her natural courage is subdued, and all her passions bury themselves in her love. If she have ambition, it is mingled and blended into one with his. Her constancy knows no abatement, until the anticipated glory of both is wrecked, and the terrible moment arrives for both, when hope itself expires. Then rage and vengeance take the place of love and constancy. The bosom that confided its whole universe to a beloved being is betrayed, and the lovers enter among the multitudes whose hearts are flames of fire, with feelings of mutual detestation. This is finely imagined; and produces the full effect on the reader's mind.

"The fate of Vathek unfolds the moral of the story; and it was never more clearly depicted, though in the disguise of Eastern fiction. Ill-starred, insatiate ambition meets its due reward. The caprices of an Eastern legitimate in pursuit of the object of his desire—imbued with the waywardness of men born to thrones in Europe, but unchecked, as in Europe, by obstacles to its gratification—are all shown with great natural truth. The quenchless thirst after what is for-

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bidden, the pride of heart, the greediness of the knowledge that is to make a demigod of the despot, the wish to read the inscription on the blades, so orientally and graphically related, the command enforced at any price, the insensate anger, the fondness for sensual gratification, the recklessness of means, the wantonness of cruelty, the love of self, the fervour of indulgence, the arrogance of a throne, and a truly royal scorn of its kind, are all prominent, and come forward in turn with perfect fidelity and force. The intercourse of Vathek with the Indian is picturesquely related; and the horrible Giaour, the terrific agent of Hell, is drawn with the pen of a master. The description of Istakhar is like a Salvator Rosa picture of nature, shadowed forth through the dimness of a summer morning veil. Bathed in wild, unearthly enchantment, the tower of the fifteen hundred steps rises in mysterious grandeur; and there Carathis piles her subjects' carcases, and weaves her incantations. The baths, the saloons, the domes, caves, and chambers described, are all different in character, and not confounded in the reader's mind. Each preserves its keeping. The freaks of the principal per-

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sonages or their attendants, the sorceries of Carathis, all the accessaries to the main object, are finished to their effect, exact, none overdone. Above all, the touches of nature exhibit not merely an intense affection for it; but a perfect familiarity with the loveliest scenes and details which landscape in every clime unfolds to its admirers. The flowers, the bees, the birds, the fruits, the trees, the streams, rocks, mountains, and clouds, the balmy air, and the radiance of noon, contribute equally to fidelity of description, arising out of a genuine observation of their beauties, and a true feeling for them. It is the same with the artificial details, which strictly preserve their Asiatic colouring under every change, the fancy filling up the outline of all with hues 'unborrowed of the sun.'"

"The author of Vathek is Dantesque. His scenes are full of wonderful power. Sounds and sights, as he describes them, are often impressive to a degree not discoverable in modern writers. Vathek's feeling and pride on looking from his tower, together with his consolation and regret because the stars are still above him, are singularly well told. The rolling Indian's

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leap into the gulf, the incantations of Carathis, the burning of the tower, the vision of Nourinohar awfully impressive where breaking light, dirge-like voices, and a sound as of water falling into baths, greet her ear, and innocence is driven from her heart by a more dazzling attraction; these all strike the mind forcibly. The use made of light and darkness, of points of light like distant stars, and of luminous effects only familiar to accurate observers of natural phenomena, is exceedingly good. The depth of depravity to which his characters descend to work out the end of their ambition, and their recklessness of all consequences, and of all human sympathy, deprive them of sympathy or pity from the reader. We are selfish even in dispensing our sympathies, and our selfishness here is right. The moral of the story is on this account rendered of more value, because the criminal unpitied becomes an object of more serious warning.

"The introduction of the goules of oriental fiction heightens the variety and fearful effect of the imagery. Who has not read of Amina and her nocturnal adventure in the Arabian Nights,

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the very superlative of the repulsive and horrible? she who leaves the bridal bed by stealth to feast upon the bodies of the dead! The descent of the Caliph and Nourinohar—when their steps down the stairs that lead to the Hall of Eblis become obliterated as it were, or quickened and accelerated until they feel as if they were hurried down a precipice immeasurable in depth —is nobly conceived, and is perfectly original. It is as if the descent, by its vastness, heralds in the mind the magnitude of the hall which the eye cannot embrace in its mighty circumference, and which is carried to the utmost extent language can convey in description of a place where definite bound is unknown. Writing has in this scene done its utmost for imagination. In that gloomy and mysterious place are discovered the countless multitudes wandering in burning agony, each heart of flame covered with the right hand, their eyes hollow, gleaming phosphorically, and sunk like the eyes of those of whom fever is gradually sucking up the life-blood; pallor upon the cheek and aridity upon the lip, dreadfully contrasting with the lascivious glances and dancing, the piercing shrieks of

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pain, and the tables of feasting and rich perfumes, raving madness and despair with hysterical joy, melancholy with forced mirth, all suspicious of each other, and solitary. Then we have the grandeur of external description in the person of Eblis and the globe of fire for his throne. Eblis not 'less than archangel ruined,' thunder-blasted, noble-browed, fair, and yet terrible. Then come the fisehless forms of the pre-adamite kings on their incorruptible beds. How simple and yet effective is the narrative! Vathek is grand from thought, an end generally attained in the genuine fictions of the East by enlarging the corporeal image. Vathek relies upon its ideal grandeur and lofty conceptions for its success, and in these it has touched the summit of intellectual power. The colouring, not of earth, flung over the details wonderfully aids the effect. Vathek, of its kind, stands alone and unrivalled in the English language."*

On the 5th of May, 1783, Mr. Beckford married Lady Margaret Gordon, daughter of the Earl of Aboyne, and sister of the late Marquis

* Review of the fourth edition of Vathek, 1835, by Cyrus Redding.

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of Huntley. To this lady he was strongly attached; and, full of aspirations after promised happiness, he set out with his bride for Switzerland, as soon as he could make arrangements for the purpose. At first he took up his residence at Colonie, near Geneva, and there Lady Margaret had a miscarriage a few months after her arrival. From thence he removed his establishment to the Chateau de la Tour, near Vevay, and continued to reside there with his beloved wife during the years 1783-4-5 and 6. Lady Margaret Beckford was brought to bed at the Chateau de la Tour, au Vevay, May 14, 1786, of the present Duchess of Hamilton, Mr. Beckford's second daughter. Two or three days after which event symptoms of miliary fever appeared, not at first calculated to excite alarm in the opinion of the celebrated Dr. Tissot, who was called in upon the occasion.

Both Mr. Beckford and his bride had won golden opinions by conduct in every way worthy of themselves, and both received continual testimonies of the most flattering respect, not only from the capital, but from the entire canton; although Mr. Beckford's ideas were

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not exactly in union with the rigid Calvinism of the neighbourhood. Nothing could more evince the regard in which they were held, than the continued solicitude of the neighbourhood, on Lady Margaret's illness, the people of all classes making anxious enquiries, the physicians, visitors, servants, all showing how affectionately they were interested in the amiable and truly excellent lady. An extract from a letter written at the time, conveyed the melancholy information of her death in the following terms—"All the skill and unremitted attentions of the faculty contended in vain with her disorder. On Friday, the twenty-sixth of May, this amiable woman breathed her last. The grief and affection of her husband, the sorrow of her friends, and all who had the happiness of knowing her, I need not attempt to describe—you will well conceive them."

The effect of this calamity upon one of Mr. Beckford's susceptible nature was such as might have been expected, from his possessing sensations so much livelier than those of other men. He found Vevay and the objects around it become at once insupportable, although his love

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of nature in that romantic land was so remarkably strong. Everything reminded him of his loss, and the recollections of the pleasure he had experienced on the spot, came so crushingly upon him, that he could not bear it beyond two or three days. His health seemed at once greatly affected, and he formed the resolution to abandon the place, and never see it more. Some reasons of consequence to himself alone delayed his setting off at once for England. He happened to be waiting a reply to letters of moment, which he had forwarded; still he could not remain longer at the Chateau. He was recommended to go into those parts of Switzerland where he had never been, and thus endeavour to relieve his mind a little by new objects. As to consolation, he would listen to none from any quarter, scarcely even from his old tutor, who had just come out on a visit to him, and whom he would not permit to leave him, until the poignancy of his sorrow was somewhat abated. Mr. Beckford, thus accompanied, took a final leave of the spot where he had spent so many happy hours, and went to Moudon, and from thence to Yverdon, at the south end of the

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Lake of Neufchâtel. There appeared on this change of scene a more settled tranquillity in his manner. At the Isle St. Pierre he confessed the soothing power of the change from the step taken, so that he felt amid the new and fascinating scenery, something at times "which stole him from himself." His tutor, and a friend who accompanied him, expressing high admiration of the scenery, as they were entering Zurich, they observed that in a certain degree he received benefit from the continued succession of the fresh objects among which they forced him. In time his first transports of sorrow seemed to yield to a more pensive grief, which appeared likely to remain long upon him. He no longer talked of returning to England, but of continuing to move about Switzerland, and this resolution he followed out, by repairing to Berne, where he sojourned in June, 1786, and for some considerable time afterwards both in that and other parts of the country. It was late in the year before he returned to England, where since he set out with his tutor, on his first tour, he had spent but a small part of his time. Restless, unsettled, but much relieved by tra-



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velling amid new scenes, he had not been many months at home, before he resolved to visit Portugal and Spain, at that time new countries. He was now in his twenty-seventh year, when with some temperaments the love of travel, and of seeing new countries, is strong, but now his feelings were to be soothed.

The residence of Mr. Beckford in Wiltshire, in which he had remained only for a few months after he became of age, had been erected by his father. At this time, Mrs. Beckford, the widow of its founder, and the father of the subject of this memoir, resided at West End, Hampstead, between the village of West End and Kilburn; and there the daughters of Mr. Beckford, bereaved of their mother, were educated, partly under the care of his old tutor, Dr. Lettice, a very worthy and conscientious man, and of a Swiss governess.

Fonthill House, as erected by Mr. Beckford's father, was one of the finest in the West of England, consisting of four stories in the centre, and wings of two stories each, connected by corridors of the fine freestone found upon the estate. There was a bold portico entrance upon a rustic

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basement, having two flights of steps to the entrance door. The hall was one of the largest in the kingdom, eighty-five feet long by thirty-eight broad, vaulted, and supported by strong stone piers. In 1755, a fire broke out in this house, which consumed an organ valued at five thousand pounds, and did other damage to such an extent that thirty thousand pounds had been expended to repair the injury sustained. When Mr. Beckford the elder was informed of the mischief done, he calmly replied, "Well, we must build it up again."

The situation of the house was ill-chosen, as it stood close to the edge of a broad lake, at the base of a thickly-wooded hill. The apartments were numerous and well-proportioned. They were furnished in the most costly style, displaying all the luxuriant appliances of the age. The walls were hung with the most expensive and beautiful works of art. Sideboards and cabinets displayed in profusion every kind of rarity in gold, silver, and jewellery. There were many costly and rare curiosities and articles of *vertu*, while splendid mirrors and ornaments of the most expensive description were seen in



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apartments furnished in the latest taste. There was one apartment called the Turkish, in which all was imitated from the East. Every apartment was rich in marbles, in sculptured pieces, and mirrors of the largest size. It was here that young Beckford had passed his time after his father's death, while he lived with his mother, before he became master of his fortune, and the estates to which he succeeded.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

VISIT TO PORTUGAL AND SPAIN—MISTAKES REGARDING THE RESIDENCE THERE—BYRON'S CHILDE HAROLD—NARRATIONS OF TRAVELLERS—FALMOUTH AND ITS VICINITY—THE PORTUGUESE CHARACTER—THE MARIALVAS—REFLECTIONS—HONOURS TO ST. ANTHONY.

It was six months after his return from Switzerland, and the breaking up of his domestic establishment on his favourite shores of the Leman, that he made his voyage to the south; a visit respecting which there has been no end to exaggerations. A visit of eight or nine months has been magnified into one of years in duration, and into housebuilding and permanent establishments in a foreign country, that never had a real existence. He took with him a large household establishment, because it suited the Portuguese taste; and from twenty to thirty persons com-

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posed his train. Less would not have comported with the figure he desired to make abroad. The second visit he paid was while the contractor erected the wall round Fonthill, which was completed in about September or October, 1796. Yet Byron apostrophises Montserrat, in Childe Harold, and wrote:—

"There thou, too, Vathek! England's wealthiest son,
Once formed thy Paradise, as not aware
When wanton wealth her mightiest deeds hath done,
Meek peace voluptuous laws was ever wont to shun.

"Here didst thou dwell, here schemes of pleasure plan,
Beneath yon mountain's ever-beauteous brow;
But now, as if a thing unblest by man,
Thy fairy dwelling is as lone as thou!
Here giant weeds a passage scarce allow
To halls deserted, portals gaping wide,
Fresh lessons to the thinking bosom, how
Vain are the pleasaunces on earth supplied;
Swept into wrecks anon by Time's ungentle tide."

This would have been striking had it been true. That Mr. Beckford, going to Portugal for eight or nine months, after his wife's death, when he was still grieving her loss, and that for such a term of residence he should build a house, was rather too extravagant. Indeed, on his first visit, he did not reside at Montserrat at all, be

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cause the owner, Mr. De Visme, a merchant, who built the factory hospital, would not let it. On his second visit to Portugal, which lasted some months more than the first, he was successful in becoming a temporary holder. It was a barbarous Gothic imitation house, built by a carpenter from Falmouth, which had been erected on the foundations of the older house of Mr. De Visme; and of this new building Mr. Beckford succeeded in becoming the tenant. The site was lovely, and surrounded by a most delightful country. He proceeded by way of Madrid, in 1794, and spent a year and better in Portugal, during which he inhabited Montserrat.

Hear another jeremiad about Montserrat:—

"The *princely* mansion of Beckford is now mouldering in ruins. It was an exceedingly elegant and tasteful building, quite in the English style. Not a vestige of the roof remains; and within, the bramble, the thorn, and the thistle, flourish in undisturbed luxuriance. A few short years more, and a guide will have to lead the traveller to the spot where the eccentric author of 'Vathek' held his court. It is a most romantic spot, commanding, in its prospect, every

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beauty that Cintra and the surrounding country affords. The lofty, tree-clad mountains behind, the undulating cultivated plains before, in the distance the illimitable sea, and around groves of the finest orange and lemon trees, force an exclamation of rapture, sadly qualified by regret at the utter destruction to which this most lovely of retreats is fast hastening. On the western turret still stands the flag-staff from which the silken banner of Old England so often fluttered in the breeze; it seemed conscious of the dignity it once possessed; and, in defiance of the ruin going on around, was determined to 'spin it out, and fight to the last!'" This is from "Wilde's Travels," which show *un grand talent*, as the French have it, for building castles in the air.

Mr. Beckford, the first time, proceeded to Portugal, by way of Falmouth, with which the communication was continual through the packets. He arrived at the latter place for embarcation in March, 1787. His visit possessed much interest in consequence of all he saw belonging to the old order of things, when absolutism reigned supreme in Portugal, and the trade

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and commerce of that country were flourishing under monopolies and serfship, when the people were in happy ignorance of better things, and the general content was founded on the general ignorance: the reign of the priest, and of superstition, directing all. The monarchy was then mild, because it had its own unconstrained will in regard to all within the circle of authority. At that time, the crimes of the monster Pombal were over, and only spoken of with a shudder. A mild sovereign was upon the throne; and the record of what Mr. Beckford observed became valuable, as a picture of what was, and never can be again, under the general idea of a regal government. He witnessed the habits of courts and of countries, not as they are, but as they were when divine right and passive obedience were enjoined upon all men, and religion rivetted the fetters of slavery. His intimacy at the court of Portugal, and the pictures he drew of the manners of the great, are by no means flattering to royalty and its associates. He saw the country too in a moment of prosperity.

"I enquired about a family at Lisbon, the Torres family, one of whom went out archbishop

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to Rio; his nephew I had known at the time the court fled to the Brazils. The name was familiar to Mr. Beckford, but he did not know which of them had been subsequently appointed to the archbishopric. I told him that I had heard the house at the quinta, which he inhabited was still standing, and some of the plate-glass still left in the windows; but that the plough worked up to the door of his deserted villa, over the ground where trees, shrubs, and flowers, had luxuriously flourished."*

"Likely enough," he remarked; "but my friends in Portugal are all dead—no matter—it is the course of destiny—you remember whence I quote:—

"'——— neque harum, quas celis arborum
In præter invisus cupressos
Ulla brevem dominum sequetur!'

"You are not aware, perhaps, that I offered my services to the government, at a critical period, as an envoy to the court of Lisbon. My acquaintance with the Prince Regent, and my intimacy with the Marialva family, adapted me

* Redding,s Notes.

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for such a post. It came to nothing; but I think I could have done the country some service. In the Marialva villa, at Cintra, where I passed so many delightful hours, the celebrated convention was signed, for which Sir Arthur Wellesley was so much censured.

"There is Don Miguel, that busy little despot, —do you know whose son he is?"

I replied in the negative.

"The reputed son of Don Pedro, Marquis of Marialva, whose father was my friend when I was in Portugal. Don Pedro, it is remarkable, was web-footed. You have read or inferred something from a passage in my Alcobaça and Batalha, where I ran a race, at the desire of the Infanta Princess of Brazil, with two of her maids of honour?"

"Was the Portuguese Court remarkably dissolute?"

"Not more so than other courts at that time. There was great goodness of heart in some of the nobility and ecclesiastics, but they were an indolent, luxurious race. The country people were excellent, tainted with few vices, but the character of the Lisbon *canaille* was abominable

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—the most flagrant crimes were common in the towns. The ignorance of all classes was deplorable. The friar of St. Vincent's, my friend, was an ecclesiastic of great learning and accomplishments—an excellent man. There were few his equals in Portugal. But the beauty of nature there—it was a heaven upon earth—I long more than ever for such a climate here." *

This is in some respect to anticipate. Mr. Beckford reached Falmouth at the commencement of March, 1787, and there he was detained by contrary winds for many days, during which he whiled away his time as well as he was able, the glass sinking. He surveyed the environs of Falmouth, the west wind gently breathing over the harbour, and employed himself in ramblings in and round the town and its vicinity, which he found upon better acquaintance, not unpleasant. He noticed the seat of the Killigrews, with oriel windows, shaded with bushes of prosperous bay, and scented wall-flowers, thus early in the season, admiring a couple of beau-

* Mr. Redding's conversations with Mr. Beckford, 1835.

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tifully-shaped young girls who were, he supposed, sighing out their souls to each other, and for whose confessions he would have given his ears.

Still wind-bound, he set off to see the tin and copper mines of Gwennap, situated in a bleak desert. A couple of miners proposed to him a descent into the bowels of the earth, for which he had no inclination. Having examined the huge steam-engines at the mines, and gone through all the functions of a young man seeking for information, he forsook the smoke, and flame, and steam of the engines for Pengreep, the mansion of Mr. Beauchamp, embosomed in shrubberies of laurel and laurestinus. He admired the copses of holly and hazel that shut in the prospect on all sides, and the translucent stream that reflected the vegetation. Here Mr. Beckford was once more at home, before a succession of glittering waterfalls and smooth turf, sprinkled with daffodils. Right glad he said he was, to disport on that "margent green," but deep his disappointment to return to Falmouth and find the wind as contrary as before, and all thought of sailing abandoned.

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It was near Falmouth that Mr. Beckford witnessed a trait of that time on visiting Trefusis, a place so called, since become the property of Lord Clinton of Trefusis. The place reminded Mr. Beckford of Mount Edgcombe. It was seated on the summit of a lofty hill, and contained curious halls and passages without end. Mrs. Trefusis, the squire's wife, was a native of Switzerland, and the traveller greatly enjoyed her conversation. To use Mr. Beckford's words, "the moment tea was over, the Esquire could not resist leading us round his improvements in kennel, stable, and ox-stall, though it was pitchy dark, and we were obliged to be escorted by grooms and groomlings, with candles and lanterns; a necessary precaution, as the winds blew not more violently without the house than within. In the course of our peregrination through halls, pantries, and ante-chambers, we passed a staircase with heavy walnut railing, lined from top to bottom with effigies of ancestors that looked quite formidable by the heavy glow of our lanterns; which illumination, dull as it was, occasioned much alarm amongst a collection of animals, both furred and feathered, the delight

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of Mr. Trefusis' existence." Here the visitor was well nigh poisoned by the odour of the various animals collected in every corner. The wind blew all night with such blusterings as he had never heard before, and he longed to be rooted, like a tree, in some sheltered corner of an inland valley, where he might never more hear of salt water or sailing. He had, in those times of sailing vessels, before steam was known, or the lords of the admiralty made their report that it could never be of any use in the Royal Navy, been already kept eleven days windbound in the harbour. He complained that he had no taste for the pursuit of hares, or examining the construction of steam-engines, or the gliding of billiard balls in the society of Barbadoes Creoles and packet-boat captains.

He found some relief, however, at the table of Squire Trefusis. A savoury pig, right worthy of Otaheite, was served up before him, and some of the finest poultry he ever tasted. There were also two or three brace of odd Cornish gentlefolks, who were neither deficient in humour nor originality. When evening came in, half-a-dozen game-cocks were ushered into the dining-room,

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by lads in scarlet jackets, and the birds had a set-to in good earnest, until tufts of their brilliant feathers flew about the apartment, which was not stained with their blood, for they were unarmed, their spurs being cut short, so that they might easily have survived fifty such battles.

Destined to remain still longer, Mr. Beckford now regretted leaving Switzerland and the waters of Evian, where he had spent his time until near the end of 1786. He lamented exchanging an oozy sea beach for the cheerful crackling of the wood fire in the old baronial hall, scented with the aromatic fragrance of the fir cones which he used to burn in Savoy, so "greatly preferable to Welsh coal, in the wòrst and dearest inn in Christendom."

Thus detained, he had no resource but to ramble among the vast brakes of furze, under the castle of Pendinas, scenting the air with the perfume of apricots, primroses and violets expanding on every bank, larks, poised in the soft blue sky, warbling delightfully, and an agreeable stillness over the sea. He had, then, no inclination to cut the wave, but, rather, to cling to the green banks of Pendinas, preferring even mining,

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and being swallowed up in the earth rather than the ocean. In the midst of these reflections, before the middle of March, he went on board, and was soon on his way to Lisbon, where he arrived after a passage of the ordinary duration; and, delivering his credentials, was soon received into the higher society of the earthquake-shaken capital of Portugal. He landed there in April, 1787, just a year after he lost Lady Margaret.

His pictures of the scenery and people of Portugal were struck out with the hand of a master. He visited Pagliaram, where he admired the roses as worthy of Pœstum. This palace was the residence of the illegitimates of John the Fifth, curious semi-royal personages, whose dwelling-place the visitor was curious to see. The palace consisted of coved saloons of lofty structure, hung with the deepest crimson damask, the upper end of each shaded with a heavy canopy of cut velvet. Huge elbow-chairs of the same material stood in rows, covered with the same material. There were no glasses, pictures, or gilding—in fact, no ornament but heavy drapery, and even the tables were concealed with cut velvet flounces, such as those with which



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dowagers array their toilets. Not a card or dining-table escaped, crimson being the prevailing colour. In one place, fast to the wall, were two *fauteuils* for the illegitimate princes; and, opposite them, chairs for those reverend father in God who were occasionally honoured with admittance. Well might Mr. Beckford observe: "What pains it must require, on the part of nurses, equerries, and chamberlains, to stifle every lively and generous sensation in the princelings whom they educate—to break a human being into the habits of impotent royalty! Dignity without command is one of the heaviest of burthens. A sovereign may employ himself; he has the choice of good or evil; but princes, like those of Pagliaram, without power or influence, who have nothing to feed on but imaginary greatness, must yawn their souls out; and become, in process of time, as formal and inanimate as the pyramids of stunted myrtle in their gardens. Happier were those babies King John did not think proper to recognise—and they were not few in number." He was glad to get out of the palace—a confined atmosphere, tainted with the odour of burnt lavender.

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The glare of the climate of Portugal, Mr. Beckford thought, was the best place in the world to make one exclaim:—

"Hide me from day's garish eye."

There were no thickets of pine, quivering poplars, or leafy chestnuts in Portugal, as there are in Italy. Dwarfish orange trees, and cinder-coloured olives, formed the larger part of the vegetation, under which lay whitening bones, scraps of leather, broken tiles, and similar rubbish. The traveller fell in, about the same time, with some Portuguese attendants upon royalty of the fair sex, between bedchamber women and maids of honour, with whom, and a pretty Irish lass, he had a sort of flirtation in the Botanic Garden, ground laid out in a costly manner, but with no great taste, reminding the observer of a place of interment. There were terraces, with finely cut balustrades, fifteen hundred feet long, and fountains throwing up jets of water, that cooled the air, but the mode of laying out the plants was formal, and very injudicious. The breezes from the entrance of the Tagus tempered the heat, and there seemed to have been nothing



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neglected on the part of nature to render the climate delightful—man alone, as usual, mistreating that which a little judgment and activity would render enviable.

There was a gigantic aqueduct, two hundred and fifty feet in height, with only one row of pointed openings, where it crossed a rapid brook that filled the traveller with admiration. The Pont de Garde and Caserta, having arches one over the other, yield to it in grandeur. The vegetation he regarded as peculiarly fine; and the murmur of the wind among the green canes he described as soothing, and highly contributive to repose.

From the scenes of nature, Mr. Beckford shifted to the interior of the houses of the noble, and to the royal palaces. He became an intimate at the Marialva palace, where he visited the Grand Prior, his particular friend. The family of the Marialvas doled out sustenance daily to three hundred domestics, generally ill-favoured dependants. The brother of the Grand Prior, the Marquis of Marialva, at a very advanced age, was still a good horseman. He had a strange taste for clocks and time-keepers, having

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not less than ten in his bed-chamber, through which the visitor followed his conductor into a saloon, hung with rusty damask, having a table in the centre, covered with curiosities; as shell-work, ivory crucifixes, models of vessels, and a number of heterogeneous things, all smelling strongly of camphor. In the midst of which, the Viceroy of Algarve entered, dressed in pea-green, and pink and silver gala, making faces as if something untoward had happened to him. A conversation ensued in three or four languages, the burthen of which was the glory and piety of John the First of Portugal, and regret for the extinction of the Jesuits, with execrations of Pombal. The viceroy's jeremiad was followed by the strangest buffoonical grimaces and slobberings—this viceroy having a perennial moistness of mouth, which drivelled at every syllable. Yet was this personage (in Portugal, at least) a good officer, and a distinguished statesman, pre-eminent among the few who have seen service, and given proofs of prowess and capacity.

While listening to one of the Queen's tenors, who was singing and accompanying himself, the curtains of an adjoining apartment, half drawn,

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gave the visitor a glimpse of Donna Henriquez de L——, the sister of Don Pedro. He discerned her advancing one moment, and then retreating, as if to observe the stranger, but not daring to enter the apartment during the absence of her mother. She appeared to be a very interesting girl, with a look of attractive languor; but it was only a glimpse, such as one sees in a dream, that he obtained of her pale features. A group of lovely children sat at her feet, resembling genii, partially concealed by folds of drapery in some allegorical work of Rubens, or Paul Veronese.

As night approached, and lights began to glimmer on turret and terrace of the palace, one half its inmates were generally engaged in reciting the litanies of saints, and the other half in fun and frolic. Together with the sound of guitars, and female voices singing modinhas, these united sounds formed a strange combination; and the visitor was listening to them attentively, when a glare of flambeaux, and the splash of oars, drew every body to the verandahs, to witness an extraordinary scene. A most heterogeneous collection of animals, which the ark of Noah could scarcely rival, issued from a barque

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of fifty oars. It landed the old Marquis of Marialva, and Don José, his son, together with musicians, minstrels, bull-fighters, grooms, monks, dwarfs, and children of both sexes, fantastically dressed. They were returning from a pilgrimage to some saint's shrine, on the opposite bank of the Tagus, which river is there ten miles wide. The way out of the vessel was led by a hump-backed dwarf, blowing a little squeaking trumpet, three or four inches long. Next come a couple of captains, led apparently by an old, strange, swaggering fellow, in a gay uniform, who had acted as a species of brigadier-general in some island. If his character in Lisbon was to be credited, a more impudent parasite and pilferer was rarely to be found. He was followed by a monk, a second Sampson in appearance, and then two Capuchin friars; next, came a sallow-faced apothecary; lastly, marched an improvisatore, spouting verses as he went along. A numerous rabble followed, and a bevy of beautiful children, of whom the Marquis of Marialva was very fond, imagining that his declining constitution derived strength from their fresh and innocent breath. The old marquis had followed other fancies

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hardly credible. He dined every day between two large silver canteens, and devoured more than could easily be conceived by those who have noted the most remarkable examples of gormandising.

When the master and his train had landed, the Marquis sent to invite Mr. Beckford to a collation in his apartment. Not less than fifty servants were in waiting; and, exclusive of half-a dozen wax torches, which were borne in state before the company, not less than a hundred of different sizes were lighted up in the rooms, intermingled with silver braziery, and casolettes giving out pleasant perfumes.

In the midst of all this state the Marquis was affable and courteous. He possessed much good humour, and his manner and tone of voice were so prepossessing as to justify fully the popularity which he enjoyed throughout the Portuguese capital. He was commonly addressed by the appellative of father, very frequently so by the queen and royal family, as well as by his own household. He had lived through the reign of the terrific Pombal, and was excluded from the operation either of the love or enmity of that

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despotic minister by the caution of the monarch himself, that he should not interfere with Marialva. The consequence of this favour on the part of the crown was, that the Marialva palace became a refuge for the oppressed, whom Pombal sought from policy or vengeance to overwhelm. Nor was this forgotten by those who had received his powerful shelter. The heartfelt respect paid to the Marquis was peculiar, and every one seemed emulous to gratify him. His two sons always bent the knee when they approached him, and the heirs of the noblest houses seemed thankful for a few words of commendation from him. The scenes thus witnessed, inspired Mr. Beckford with grateful recollections; he was struck with the beneficence diffused without guile or affectation, and protection imparted without abject servility.

" How preferable is patriarchal government of this nature to the cold theories pedantic sophists would establish, and which, should success attend their selfish, atheistical ravings, bid fair to undermine the best and surest props of society! When parents cease to be honoured by their children, and the feeling of grateful subordina-

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tion in those of helpless age or condition are unknown, kings will soon cease to reign, and republics to be governed by the councils of experience; anarchy, rapine, and massacre, will walk the earth, and the abode of demons be transferred from hell to our unfortunate planet."*

The procession called that of the Corpo de Deos, or Corpus Christi, was witnessed by Mr. Beckford in all its glory. It has been since shorn of some of its most resplendant beams. The whole streets seemed metamorphosed into tents: damask, tapestry, and fringed counterpanes, that glittered with gold, incumbered the ways through which the procession passed. It generally issued from the church in the Roçio, near the Inquisition; the banners of the different convents leading off, followed by the respective monks. The figure of St. George, on a horse from the royal stables, came after these; the dress of the Saint's servants being very much like the knave of clubs upon an English pack of cards. The saint himself was dressed in the costume worn by Francis I. of France, lent for the occasion. The hat of velvet, adorned with white

* Letters from Spain and Portugal, 1835.

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ostrich feathers studded all over with diamonds of great value, was the property of the Duke de Cadaval, who lends them on the occasion. Behind the saint came a richly dressed page; he, too, was mounted on one of the royal horses, and after him came an armour-bearer in a complete suit *cap-d-pie*. Then followed knights and led horses, and music, and kettle drums, and fantastic musicians, and next the pretended body of the Saviour of the world on a bier, covered with a rich pall, and sheltered by a canopy borne by the most distinguished statesmen of the country, the king walking on the right side of the bier, and the heir apparent on the left; the whole closing with troops and music. Mr. Beckford complained that his head swam while he recounted what he saw, and his ears tingled with the sounds of bells, voices, and cannon. Flocks of sallow monks were seen on all sides, white, brown, and grey, pressing along like turkeys driving to market. He heard high mass, saw incense ascending to the clouds, and the light of innumerable tapers reflected from the diamonds of the ostensory, just elevated by devout hands to receive the mysterious wafer. All the

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insignia of pontifical grandeur was developed there. The visitor complained that his eyes were dazzled as if awakened from a vision of celestial splendour.

Among his other visits was one to a dinner given by a gentleman of Irish extraction, six feet high; one of those whose business it had been to marry a large fortune, rejoicing in the name of Da Silveira, with a number of prefixes The lady he had carried off, was a Brazilian heiress, a fubsical, squat dame, with a head like that of Holofernes upon old tapestry, somewhat dropsical too, having a manly voice, and great cleaving to her *caro sposo*. The latter gave magnificent dinners of at least sixty dishes, and eight ragouts after the fashion of France, England, and Portugal. The dessert was a perfect fortification, and the cake tower was three feet high. The company in no degree harmonized with the splendour of the entertainment. Only one lady from the palace was present, with whom Mr. Beckford conversed in sentimental Italian, and compliments from Operas. His companion he did not much relish. "The sun was just diffusing his last rays over the distant rocks of Cintra; the air bal-

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samic, and the paths among the vines springing with fresh herbage, and a thousand flowers revived by last night's rain. Giving up the narrow track which leads through the rural regions to the Signora, I stalked by her side in a furrow well garnished with nettles, acanthus, and dwarf aloes, stinging and scratching myself at every step . . . . . How should I have enjoyed rambling with the young Irish girl about those pleasant clover paths, between luxuriant leaves and tendrils, not fastened to still poles and stumpy stakes, as in France and Switzerland; but climbing up light canes eight or ten feet in height."

Some of the scenes in these by-gone days of the old court, before the French Revolution decimated those who proclaimed the law of all rule to be the divine right of kings, must have furnished him with singular comparisons in the later years of his life. Upon one occasion, he partook, spending a day with the Marialva family, in the soup, or "thick slab," presented by some monks on the occasion of the festival of St. Anthony. There he met, in the home circle of the nobleman above named, lords, ladies, dwarfs,

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monks, bullies, buffoons, and almoners. From these he stole away to visit a monastery close by, which he reached from the terrace where they had just finished a collation. He ascended a staircase to some cloisters which conducted to the neglected library. The cloisters through which he passed, not built in the purest style, were attractive from their ornaments, and a corridor connected with them, and opening upon a range of cells, extended five hundred feet in length; every window having a resting place where the monks might loll, and enjoy the freshness of the river. There, too, he saw a little dark treasury, in that part of the edifice which is said to have been inhabited by King Emanuel; and he was shown some fine gold plate made in 1506. The pinnacles, niches, and canopies, with figures of the Apostles, met his high commendations. He next entered the church, one of the largest in Portugal, but fantastic as the Temple of Jerusalem as shown in some old German bibles. It was the day of that most holy Saint Anthony on the morrow; already rockets were shooting upward, bonfires blazing, French horns sounding for the five hundredth and fifty-

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fifth anniversary when that sorely tempted saint passed away out of his temptations into the glories of Paradise. They had built a new church over the hallowed spot where the saint was born, to the great edification of Lisbon. The building was a poor affair; but over the saint's image—the idol should be the real term—there was stretched a canopy of flowered velvet, and the woodwork of the windows near gleamed with polished gold.

A pompous ceremony followed, at which a number of gawking English were staring from the portal of the church at the ceremony. A host of priests attended, while music, fit for jigs and minuets, rather than for any devotional service, composed the musical part of the entertainment. After this was concluded, *Frè Joaõ Jacinto*, a very celebrated preacher, mounted the rostrum, and began with a number of high-sounding phrases in honour of St. Anthony, with a voice that might be heard from Dan to Beersheba. He exhibited real powers of eloquence; and treated kings and conquerors, heroes and sages, old or new, with supreme contempt. He levelled fortifications, reduced the most superb

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buildings to dust, treated armies as pismires, and the imperial purple as cobweb. Except the heretical English at the portal, he no doubt impressed all his auditory with the vast superiority of St. Anthony above such objects of erroneous and impious admiration.

Nor was this all. Mr. Beckford turned reporter, and brought off a portion of the Father's eloquent sermon.* It is a fragment worthy of record, as showing how far the efforts of men of particular opinions will go in enforcing whatever doctrines they advocate for their own advantage; to which advocacy they are brought, not by the result of impartial reasoning, or any thing approaching honest conviction; but, because they have been so taught as soon as they could understand a dogma, by those who preceded them in the same pursuit. This strain of eloquence, delivered with great earnestness—the secret of every orator's success with his auditory—was as follows:—

"Happy were those Gothic ages, falsely called ages of barbarism and ignorance, when the hearts of men, uncorrupted by the delusive beverage of

* Sketches of Spain and Portugal.

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philosophy, were open to the words of truth falling like honey from the mouths of saints and confessors—such words as distilled from the lips of Anthony, yet a suckling, hanging from the breast at this very spot. It was here the spirit of the Most High descended upon him—here that he conceived the sublime intention of penetrating into the most turbulent parts of Europe, setting the inclemency of seasons and the malice of men at defiance, and sprinkling amongst lawless nations the seeds of grace and repentance. Here, my brethren, is the door out of which he issued. Do you not see him in the habit of a Merino de Coro, smiling—smiling with all the graces of innocence, and dispensing with his infant hands to a group of squalid children the portion of nourishment he has just received from his mother?

"But Anthony, from the first dawn of his existence, lived for others, and not for himself; he forewent even the luxury of meditation; and, instead of retiring into a peaceful cell, rushed into the world, helpless and unprotected, lifting high the banner of the cross amidst perils and uproar, appeasing wars, settling differences, both



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public and domestic, exhorting, at the risk of his life, ruffians and plunderers to make restitution, and armed misers, guarding their coffers with bloody swords, to open their hearts and their hands to the distresses of the widow and the fatherless.

"Anthony ever sighed after the crown of martyrdom, and had long entertained an ardent desire of passing over into Morocco, and exposing himself to the fury of its bigotted and cruel sovereign: but the commands of his superior detain him on the point of embarcation; he makes a sacrifice of even this most laudable and glorious ambition; he traverses Spain, repairs to Assisi, embraces the rigid order of the great St. Francis, and continues to his last hour administering consolation to the dejected—fortifying their hopes of heaven, and confirming the faith of such as were wavering or deluded, by a succession of prodigies. The dead are raised; the sick are healed, the sea is coloured, by a glance of St. Anthony: even the lowest ranks of the creation are attracted by eloquence more than human, and give marks of sensibility. Fish swim in shoals to hear the word of the Lord;

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and to convince the obdurate and accursed whose hearts the false reasoning of the world had hardened, mules and animals the most perversely obstinate humble themselves to the earth, when Anthony holds forth the sacrament, and acknowledges the presence of the divinity."

Then began all sorts of light music, to the disgust of Mr. Beckford, who was soon after cheered with the presence of the prior of Avis, who, in place of attending similar vile ceremonies, had spent his time in visiting the sick, and relieving the indigent, more in coincidence with the duties enjoined by the saint himself, who had been celebrated for ages in Portugal for his charity and beneficence. With this prelate, in place of sharing in the sight of the shows and vanities of the processions and rites going forward, they spent the evening on the shore of Belem, stopping, as they passed the Marialva palace, to take up Don Pedro and his nursing father, who proposed to visit the Carthusian convent of Cachiez on the way.

Here they met with a youth of good parentage and talent, who, for some unknown cause, had entered as a monk, exciting pity at the



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reflection of how many suns he was condemned, to see go down in that seclusion. All were affected at the sight, and one of the party, forgetting his own position in regard to the faith, exclaimed loudly against the condemnation of any to become human sacrifices. Mr. Beckford had a visit, among others, from the son of the Marquis Pombal, the dread and scourge of the noblest houses in Portugal. He pretended that his father had died in distressed circumstances, although the royal finances were so long at his command, and he, the son, had an income of a hundred and twenty thousand crowns per annum. There was one Joaô Telles, a descendant of the Penalva family, legitimate or illegitimate. He was judge conservator of the English factory, and reminded Mr. Beckford of Lord Thurlow, the same vigour of character, to which he added the cunning of the serpent, being equally master of the arts of threat and dissimulation. There was a father Theodore, a church hypocrite; and another churchmen named Aguila, who was so much the reverse, that he made the church by which he obtained his living the subject of continual sarcasms.

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Next came music, and a deputation to invite the Englishman to a convent to witness a festival in honour of the Heart of Jesus. In fact, the church seeings and doings were so continual a tax upon the strangers' time that they became a bore. For his relief he turned to the theatre, to dissipate the fumes of so much monastic holiness as he had been suffering from, and there found more cause for disgust than amusement. By royal command females were not allowed to appear upon the stage, and their place was supplied by young men with huge calves, and soft blue beards, clenching nosegays, which would have prostrated a Goliah at a blow, followed by rural milkmaids of the male sex, who tossed up their petticoats at every step.

The archbishop confessor figured in one scene in the palace, exhibiting how the fortunes of some befriend them under despotic rule. He had, from a common soldier, risen to be a corporal, then sank into a monk, overflowing with good humour and toleration. The notorious minister, Pombal, judged him, from his ignorance and good temper, a fitting individual to be father confessor to the queen, when she was

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Princess of Brazil. After she ascended the throne, he became archbishop *in partibus*, grand Inquisitor, and the main spring in the existing government of Portugal. He was a sturdy fellow, who was ever merry amidst threatening calamity, most probably because he was too obtuse to be sensible of it.

The Portuguese music, particularly some of the Brazilian melodies, was very attractive. It would seem that in proportion to the general effect produced by this science, and the estimation in which fashion regards it, there is an absence of what is truly great, virtuous, and exalting. The arts and sciences, literature and general knowledge in Portugal, were then, and are still, less than in any other Christian country in Europe; but the music there was peculiarly bewitching and delightful, the modinhas almost peculiar to itself. It was not the difficult cold offspring of the science which distinguishes the later German school, and makes the merit in difficult execution, but it was all which made the merit of music in antiquity, and belonged to poetry and sense, from which it has elsewhere become too much detached, namely, that melody

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and harmony which steals into the heart, animates to combat, incites religious rapture, or melts the soul to love. Such music is irresistible in its effects in a southern climate. In the north, the truthful effect of melodious sounds is felt but by few comparatively; and the passion for music is little more than any other fashionable folly, its foundation being unknown, and its true ends rarely understood.

In the capital of Portugal the Conde Villa Nova, afterwards the Marquis of Abrantes, often went through the streets tinkling the little silver bell in front of the canopy that covered the sacrament. He always kept in close attendance upon the Host, and persevered in the tinkling vocation, at all hours and in all weathers, wherever the spiritual assistance called—dungeons or garret, he was as punctual to the duty as a London muffin boy with his winter afternoon tintinnabulum. He who thus announced to all the faithful the approach of the celestial majesty was the second son of the Marquis of Marialva, while the elder hope employed himself in dancing attendance upon the queen. Such is the mental prostration where reason is

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considered to be subsidiary to the acts of the priest, and the volition of the despot.

At length the bright sunshine of Portugal, brilliant as it was, began to grow tedious to the visitor. He longed to be extended full length upon the fresh herbage of some English valley, where "the fairies gambolled in the height of midsummer." Portugal was too hot for these fairy animalculæ, the sultriness and dust of Lisbon being unbearable. Mr. Beckford declared "there was more vernal delight and joy" in our green hills and copses than in all the stunted olive fields and sun-burnt promontories of Portugal.

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## CHAPTER IX.

PORTUGUESE ENTERTAINMENTS—LOW CALIBRE OF MIND—PADRE DUARTE—THE PENALVA FAMILY—ODOROUS GARDENS—VILLA RAMALHAÔ—SENHORA DA PENHA, PRIOR OF AVIZ—MAFRA—HERETIC ENGLISH WOMAN—HER CONVERSION—HER FUNERAL—THE GRAND INQUISITOR—A SNUG DINNER—THE ROCK OF LISBON—PENHA VERDE—THE QUEEN—ST. VINCENT THE MARTYR.

In regard to the entertainments presented to visitors, there was always an endless variety of dishes and great abundance; but the conversational topics were below the mental calibre of schoolboys in England. Going to dine at the Anjeja palace with Don Diego de Noronha, he found the eldest hope of the family learning to look out at the window, the chief employment of high life in Portugal. One young priest, who

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seemed to have taken the lead of the others, gave some marvellous stories. The late queen had pounded up a pearl of great value to take as a medical potion. Then a nun of such a convent had intrigued with Beelzebub, and was in consequence sent to the Inquisition, and the window in the convent by which his satanic majesty had entered was walled up and painted over with crosses. These things were related in sober seriousness. It was added, that by the precautions taken no such attempt ever again could be successful. What a state of society must that be, where such things are not only related but credited!

The Convent of the Visitation was marked by the fine singing of some of the ladies. Scarlati also sang at that time. Mr. Beckford commended the taste and execution displayed by many of the ladies of the Portuguese capital. Yet he had few commendations to bestow upon the capital itself, which he described as having the streets irregular, all kinds of filth accumulated in them, and negro fortune-tellers in the midst. The first sight of the city is prepossessing, seen externally, a little distance away. The

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buildings were in bad taste, the churches in that of Borromini, with ornaments to be in no way commended. At night, by the light of the moon, it puts on an appearance much more interesting than when that luminary rises behind the mountains on the opposite side of the Tagus, and the streets are lost in deep, dark shadows.

The Penalvas brought a famous Jesuit to see Mr. Beckford. His name was the Padre Duarte, whom the inexorable Pombal had kept in prison for eighteen years. He was accompanied also by a tall, knock-kneed, rhubarb-faced professor of the art of medicine, dressed in satin, one of "the most conceited professors of the art of murdering" he had ever met with. These two individuals talked incessantly, and pretended to give a preference to all that was English. One wanted to know if Sir Peter Lely was not the actual president of the English Academy of Painting, and praised Hans Holbein for being an Englishman. They were surprised to hear that Sir Peter Lely had been dead a century, and that Hans Holbein was born at Basle. Other visitants were announced, and the host soon grew tired of the heterogeneous character of

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the company that had congregated in his mansion.

Rising early, he proceeded on horseback along the shore of Belem, during which he visited the convent of San José di Ribamar, at the Quinta of which name he resided. The friars showed him into a small court, surrounded with Tuscan columns, and a fountain in the middle, sprinkling a profusion of flowers, and giving an oriental air to the enclosure. It was kept pretty clean, being the counterpart to their garden, in which weeds abounded. Beyond was the thicket, where the underwood remained unclipped, intruding upon the alleys and hanging over the sea in a most romantic manner. The flower-garden was in style as ancient, perhaps, as the dominion of the Moors in Portugal, and espaliers of citron and orange covered all the walls.

Breakfasting on his return at the Marquis of Penalva's, every thing kind and cordial was placed at the visitor's disposal. This was the custom in Portugal to guests admitted into the penetralia of a first-class family. Music was in waiting, if a concert was desired; if books, the library was open, and a librarian ready to explain

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or to give out what might be wanted. A fine collection of pictures, of the Italian and Flemish schools, was at hand, and there were some good botanical collections; while, if literary or scientific society and conversation were sought, there were present individuals the best in each department that the capital could afford. There was a chapel, too, lit up with its altar, and open for service, showing that spiritual duties were not neglected, when the season called for their use. The breakfast, with an accompaniment of iced fruit, was magnificently served. In one of the chambers opening into the saloon the voices of females were heard; and, as a rare indulgence, Mr. Beckford was permitted to intrude upon their seclusion; when, in the midst of a group of senhoras, seated upon the ground in the eastern fashion, he perceived the newly-consecrated Bishop of Algarve, with a small, black, sleek, school-boyish head and sallow cheeks, which were overshadowed with a pair of green spectacles. Mr. Beckford fancied he traced in the expression which beamed from his eyes, under the green glasses, not an expression absolutely partaking of the most mild or apos-

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tolic character. In time it was possible he might come to acquire that varnish of hypocrisy without which the least holy intentions often miss their aim. Considering under whom he had studied, it was wonderful he had not made a farther progress, his tutor having been one of a set working hard to undo what little had been done that was good for any thing in the country.

At Marvilla, in the evening of the day, the visitor could not help admiring the broad expanse of the river from those neglected gardens. It recalled the Lake of Geneva, and all that had befallen him upon its banks the year before. It was now but the end of June, and a twelvemonth before he had tasted of as much happiness as it was possible for man to enjoy at the Chateau de la Tour. Death had made him fly from the spot of his enjoyment, yet still he lingered in Switzerland, in portions of the romantic country to which he was so attached. Passing through France, and failing in that country or at home to keep his mind in activity, he had determined to visit Portugal and Spain, to which he went with a large retinue, and in-

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troductions to the first people in the country. Here at times, in the glare of the court, where all was new to him, he felt his spirits were painfully depressed, as in the Marvilla grounds. At length his wonted love of nature returned to him in the stillness of a garden rivalling that of a Carthusian convent, the wind showering white jasmine flowers over the parterres of myrtle. Half intoxicated with the delicious perfume, the party reached the Quinta of San Jose, where he resided.

He took for a month or two, in the way of a loan, some time before, a villa called Ramalhaô, to which he now paid his first visit. The apartments were spacious and healthy, and the views over sea and ocean boundless; but the country in front was arid. The situation, also, was too cool, unless the heat became violent. There were no chimneys in the rooms—none anywhere except in the kitchen. A gardener belonging to his household had brought out some Cape Indian corn and other plants from England, that shot up with wonderful rapidity to a great elevation in the climate of Portugal. He drove to the Marialva Villa, which had been created by

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the Marquis at an expense of many thousand pounds. It consisted of an elegant pavilion, parterres, fountains, alleys of laurel, bay, and laurestinus, and every ornament adopted in Portuguese gardening. Dinner was served at an inn in the village of Cintra. From thence the party proceeded to Collares, a place with the air of an Alpine village, where there were other gardens, some laden with fruit till the boughs bent under them, the ground strewed with apricots, oranges, and plums. Here he feasted on golden apples and purple plums, thinking himself in the orchards of Alcinous. They returned to the Villa Marialva, the sky clear, the sun setting fiery; the vast, distant convent of Mafra glowing with light, and looking like the enchanted palace of some giant of romance, while the country around was bare and desolate. The party rested for a time in a pavilion, designed by Pillemont. It represented a bower of Indian foliage, trees mingling their branches, and between them discovering peeps of a summer sky. A magnificent lustre of fifty lights, having festoons of brilliant glass, twinkled like strings of diamonds. The whole depended from the mouth of a flying

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dragon. When the party returned, it was dark, and pages rode full speed in front of the carriage, carrying flaming torches, the sparks and smoke of which came full in the passengers' faces. On they dashed, at the rate of twelve miles in the hour, the mules belonging to the royal stud proceeding at full gallop, without a stumble.

Mr. Beckford remarked, on Mrs. Morgan, his housekeeper, killing three toads in his cellar, that had waddled round her, the largest seven inches in diameter, that "Portuguese toads may be more distinguished for size, but are not half so amiably speckled as those we have the happiness to know in England."

After visiting palaces and quintas, examining sculptures and tracery, all with the glance of an artist, Mr. Beckford engaged to visit the Dutch consul at a *fête* given in honour of his birthday. He dined with the Marchioness of Marialva, the Marquis being engaged at the court. From thence he slipped away, earlier than he expected. The party went to drink tea on the terrace of an Englishman at Cintra; a spot commanding noble views, fine foliage, citrons covered with fruit, and willows of the freshest verdure.



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There he meditated, leaning against a cork tree overhanging the verandah, shattered pinnacles of rock, and the turrets of the convent of Nossa Senora da Penha, being over all. From thence they went to the Dutch consul's. Madam Guildermeister was a superior woman, and did the honours of her place well. She was somewhat original, and a little censorious. The supper was most magnificent, the lights profuse, the plate in profusion, the broad table covered with delicacies, and a dessert frame from fifty to sixty feet long, gleaming with vases and flowers. A mad Frenchman played off some odd tricks, which produced a singular effect. He scandalised some of the lay company to their faces, and then abused the English. A lady, whom he had calumniated, took a part in the scene—which was so comic that the Marquis, Don Pedro, and Mr. Beckford stayed late to enjoy it.

The Marquis of Marialva, as first lord of the bedchamber, and master of the horse, as well as being prime favourite, had all the musical performances attached to the court under his command. Whenever, therefore, it gratified his guest, he permitted him to make a selection for

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the band. One morning, he was lost entirely, being absorbed in the harmony of the wind instruments stationed at a distance in a thicket of orange and bay trees. "Did I consult the health of my mind," he reasoned with himself, "I should dismiss these musicians: their plaintive, affecting tones are sure to awaken in my bosom a long train of mournful recollections; and, by the force of associated ideas, to plunge me into a state of languor and gloom."

But the Prior of Aviz broke in upon his seclusion, and roused him from his reveries. He made him go to the archbishop to the rehearsal of a council to be held in the presence of the Queen. Such councils were new to the old confessor, who had been just placed in the control of the cabinet against his will. When the meeting took place, he was in a state of turmoil, and flushed in countenance. He shook and crumpled his white flannel garments, and struck his portly paunch with vehemence, as if it had waited longer than customary for its replenishment—though it sent forth no hollow sound. He imparted to Mr. Beckford a summary of what had been made known to him from



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the different departments of the state, and that with great perspicuity—so that "the fat paunch did not make a lean pate." During this statement, and a scene so rarely witnessed demanding all the attention, Mr. Beckford found the music of Haydn and Jomelli, which he had heard in the morning, still linger too much about him.

A proposal was made to visit Mafra the next morning, and to this he readily assented.

This celebrated convent is fourteen miles from Lisbon, over an open and parched country. Towards Cintra the landscape looks well, but towards the far-famed convent, nothing can appear more barren. With excellent mules, in about an hour and a quarter the party found themselves under the strong-built wall which encloses the grounds of Mafra. A glimpse was soon obtained of the towers and dome of the edifice, built of marble, and of a vast expanse of deep blue sea. It rose above heathy eminences, here and there diversified by the bushy heads of Italian pines, and spires of cypress trees. Winding among the declivities, they were received by a detachment of lay brothers who waited to open the gates of the royal enclosure, where a

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recent fire had consumed much wood and verdure. It was on suddenly turning the wall of the great garden, that one of the vast fronts of the convent, like a sheet of palaces, was disclosed to the view. The order of architecture was not what a lover of pure Greek architecture would approve. There were doors and windows enough, fancifully shaped, though tolerably well-proportioned. Suddenly, on coming round a lofty square pavilion, which flanked the building, the grand front displayed itself—eight hundred feet in extent. The centre was formed by the porticoes of the church, adorned richly with columns, and bas-reliefs in marble. Two towers on each side rose to the height of two hundred feet, joining the *corps de logis*, and the front was terminated right and left by stately pavilions. The towers, light and airy, were clustered with pillars of considerable beauty—though their form was too much in the pagoda taste, and wanting in solemnity. The towers had bells of the largest dimensions. One chime cost a hundred thousand crusados, which was set playing the moment the visitors arrived. The platform, and steps before the columnar entrance of the church, were exceedingly grand; and the

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dome over all, which lifts itself proudly above the pediment of the portico, was light and elegant. The vast extent of front, the glare of the ornaments in the full sunshine, and the azure of the distant ocean, were the objects which most attracted the sight; for the country in front was not of a very interesting character. The church, dedicated to St. Peter, the visitor found to be a most imposing edifice, seen internally, with its altar-piece of St. Anthony, which he has so well described in recording the fruit of this visit. On the day after was the festival of St. Augustine, in the hands of whose disciples the monastery then was. All the tapers were lighted for the occasion. The marble which encrusted the interior of the church was exceedingly beautiful. Roses and palm branches were exquisitely sculptured; and the Corinthian capitals might have served as models, so sharply were they executed.

The next scene in this glorious edifice led through magnificent vaulted halls, panelled with alabaster and porphyry, and carpeted. The visitor became bewildered and fatigued, comparing himself to a knight-errant in the maze

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of an enchanted palace. The guide to all this fine display was a good-natured, slobbering monk, who was surprised at being addressed in good Portuguese, and asked when the chapels and sacristies would terminate. The dormitory was six hundred feet in length, and had three hundred cells, solidly arched, sufficiently spacious, lofty, well-lighted, and furnished with tables and cabinets of Brazil wood. The library was three hundred feet long, finely stuccoed, and paved with marble. The books consisted of sixty thousand volumes, among them were richly illuminated first editions of the Greek and Roman classics. From the roof of the convent a bird's eye view of the convent and palace gardens was obtained. The dome was one of the best proportioned in Europe. The fresh balsamic air came upon the visitors from orchards of citron and orange, tempering the warmth of the glowing atmosphere. Hospitality was tendered at the house of the Capitan Mor. The floors were covered with mats of the finest texture; and the beds with satin coverlids, richly embroidered and fringed. A luxurious repast was set before the strangers, ceremoniously served in the feudal

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style. After coffee, the party attended vespers; and the service was chaunted with the most imposing solemnity. There were six enormous organs in the church alone.

The part of Mafra styled the palace was exhibited by passing up a magnificent staircase. The suite of apartments was from seven to eight hundred feet long; but, as to the furniture, that was locked up in Lisbon. The apartments were dull, and without variety in form. Tired of sight-seeing, and still more of the jabber of the conductors, Mr. Beckford and his friends bolted out from their guides into the garden, which was about a mile and half in circumference. It was much neglected. There were thickets of pine and bay trees, and orchards of lemon and orange; but the parterres were in a neglected state.

After hearing another service, a procession took place, and paused in one apartment called the Hall de Profundis. There the monks, passing towards the refectory, stood in solemn ranks before every repast, and revolved in their minds the precariousness of human existence. It was striking to see, by lamplight, their venerable figures, in black and white habits, bending their

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eyes down upon the pavement, and absorbed in gloomy meditation.

From thence the brethren took their place in the refectory, two hundred feet long, each with his caraffe of water and wine, and his apples and salad; for neither fish nor flesh were served up on the vigil of St. Augustine, which was observed as a fast. The visitors returned to the Capitan Mor's apartments, and slept. The next day they heard high mass; and then visited some gardens, where they found a grateful shelter from the sun under the shade of bay and ilex.

The party returned to Cintra, and to a few hours of uninterrupted peace, contemplating the summer sky and the rising moon behind a shrubby hill until night shaded all things. The heat made the visitor trifle away the day in the pavilion of his house, surrounded by hidalgoes and musicians. He described his saloon as half shaded by curtains, the light received casting a mild glow on the mats and sofas. Large mirrors multiplied the profusion of drapery. One of the visitors said, that before the earthquake he remembered an apartment like it, communicating

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with the nunnery of Odivellas, the pious retirement of King John the Fifth. There the king had, to charm him, the celestial voices of the recluses, far superior to the musicians assembled at that moment. The tones came from recesses wherein no mortal of the male sex but the pious king was allowed to penetrate; and then two or three of the priest singers from Naples and Venice joined the chorus. The result was perfection. This statement was confirmed by others present.

Now came in full cry the intelligence of the conversion of an old heretic English woman to the only true faith. She had called for a priest to confess her, at the eleventh hour, and to receive the abjuration of her errors. She lodged at an inn in Cintra, kept by a flaming Irish Catholic saint; and sufficient priests and assistants were promptly ready to aid in the good work. "That very evening," said the Abade, "the 'aged innocent' was to be buried triumphantly." Some of the nobility were to grace the occasion; and among them the Marquis of Marialva himself. Mr. Beckford was invited to attend, as it was to be a very gay funeral.

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He determined to witness it. Before the door a mob had assembled, and at one of the windows stood the grand prior counting his breviary, and looking as if he wished himself a thousand miles away. One of the patriarchal establishment rubbed his hands for joy, with a sort of leer on his face, as if he were mentally snapping his fingers at Satan, now the old lady was considered safe out of his clutches.

The dead saintess lay in another room, where great chaunting and praying went on. The grand prior did not relish his company; but, notwithstanding, shrugged up his shoulders, and pronounced it very edifying. The sainted innocent had been a so-so sort of a character, and had lived some years on a very easy footing with an English bachelor, and some others of her countrymen; but, finding consumption fast carrying her out of the world, her Irish hostess and a couple of priests had interfered to save her. Nobles attended on such a rapturous occasion. The body, dressed in white, lay snug in a rose-coloured sort of bandbox, with six silver handles. Here was a Count, and there a Viscount, not all super-excellent characters, six in number, the

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last a judge, with a most hang-dog visage. The bells of Cintra struck up a merry peal; and old and young followed, amid a dense cloud of dust, telling their beads, and rejoicing at the triumph of the true faith over the prince of darkness. In the church lights were blazing, incense ascending, and a hymn, sang by youthful voices, broke forth in gladness. The Marquis of Marialva rejoiced, and abused all heretics, praising the happiness of the convert, and declaring, "she does not care a straw at present for us all." A collation at Mr. Beckford's, at Ramalhaô, terminated the edifying scene.

A Count San Lorenzo, slightly affected with madness—and no wonder, having been eighteen years imprisoned by the implacable Pombal, and released ultimately by the queen—visited Mr. Beckford while in Portugal. He would take no office, but had retired to the convent of the Necessidades. All efforts to soothe or flatter him proved abortive. Devotion swallowed him up wholly. He was calm and rational, except when imprisonment and Pombal were alluded to. At other times his conversation was amusing and anecdotic.

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The Duke d'Alafors, generally known as the Duke of Braganza out of Portugal, a man who had seen seventy winters, wore rouge and patches, lisped French affectedly, and danced, being a complete *petit maître* at that time of life, was the hero appointed to mark out an encampment for the cavalry on the arrival of the queen at Cintra, and was introduced in due form. While this Duke and the Marquis of Marialva attended to their duties, Don Pedro, Mr. Beckford, and others visited a fair in a neighbouring village. It was held at a pleasant spot, bounded on one side by a convent of Hieronimites, and on the other by rocky hills, shattered into uncouth forms. One of these, called Pedro d'os Ovos, terminated by a cross, was a grotesque object. Groves of olive, ilex, and citron, filled up a small valley, where clear waters were conducted through cloisters and gardens, surrounded by low marble columns, supporting morisco arches adorned with fretwork. The peasantry were scattered over a lawn, some conversing with monks, others, half intoxicated, sliding off their donkeys, and falling upon the ground; others bargaining for silk-nets and spangled rings to

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bestow upon their mistresses. The monks were busy in administering all sorts of consolations to the throng. On visiting the Marialva villa at night, music was heard from among the thickets, and the Marchioness of Marialva and Donna Henriquetta, with a group of female attendants, were listening. It was one of those genial and serene nights when music acquires a double charm, and the whole scene contributed to throw the visitor's mind into a sort of trance, from which he was not roused again without a degree of reluctance.

The Grand Inquisitor of Portugal and Archbishop Confessor was also visited by appointment. He was designated as an honest, pleasant man, who received his guests in a cordial manner. This high personage talked much nonsense about England and its archbishops, having taken Lord Tyrawly for one of the number. While thus employed, a court fool, several Dominicans, and other odd characters entered the great audience chamber. A lay brother present observed: "Here is a true picture of our customs. Three sorts of persons get into our palaces; men of superior abilities, buffoons,

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and saints; the first soon lose what they possess, the saints become martyrs, the buffoons are sure to prosper."

The archbishop assented to this remark by a gracious nod; and when his visitor rose to go away, would not permit him, but led him, through a number of dark rooms and passages, to a private door, which opened from the queen's presence-chamber into a large saloon, crowded with half the dignitaries of the kingdom, bishops, heads of orders, secretaries of state, generals, lords of the bed-chamber, and courtiers of all denominations, as fine and as conspicuous as embroidered uniforms, stars, crosses, and gold keys could make them.

The company were astonished. Half the party went down upon their knees, some with petitions and some with memorials; others begging places, promotions, or benedictions, of which the archbishop was not prodigal, treating the demonstrations of fawning and servility which he encountered with wonderful composure. Then pushing through the crowd, he beckoned some two or three lords into a small room.

"My dear Englishman," he said, "these are

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all a parcel of flattering scoundrels, do not believe a word they say to you. Though they seem to glitter like gold, mud is not meaner. I know them well. Here," he continued, holding up the flap of Mr. Beckford's coat, "here is a proof of English prudence; this little button to secure the pocket is a precious contrivance, especially in grand company. Do not leave it off; do not adopt any of our fashions, or you will repent it."

The tide of adulation did not diminish. Even those who must have heard it continued in the same strain, until a message was received, commanding his immediate attendance on the queen. He bristled away, saying, "I shall be back in half-an-hour, and you must dine with me!"

"Dine with him!" exclaimed the company, in chorus. "Such an honour never befel one of us! How distinguished you are!"

This archbishop and confessor to the queen, it may be presumed, was Ignacio de San Caetano, a man of humble origin, but of excellent character, loved a good glass of wine, was at peace with all men, and kept back the queen in her fits of madness.

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With a pleasanter engagement upon his hands, Mr. Beckford could not but obey, after hearing, for more than half-an-hour, the high-flown compliments paid to him by the fine-feathered birds that thronged the levée. The Marquis of Marialva came and whispered:

"I am to be of the party, too, for the first time in my life; not a creature is to be admitted."

A knock at the private door opened it, and a table of three covers displayed itself; while, on a sofa, in one corner, sat the prelate, wrapped in a tattered, snuff-coloured greatcoat, sadly patched.

"Come, serve up, let us be merry! Oh, those women, those women above stairs! what a plague it is to settle their differences! Who knows better than you, marquis, what enigmas they are to unriddle? I dare say the Englishman's archbishops have not half such puzzles to get over as I have: let us see what we have got for you."

Then three roasted pigs were brought in upon a tray of massive silver, and a vast and excellent pillau. It appeared that the archbishop's table never exhibited any other variety of dish, ex-



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cept on fast days. An archbishop fed upon roast pig must have been a novelty—how would it answer, touching the services of the church? The dessert made up for all preceding deficiencies on the present occasion;—fruits, sweetmeats, and wine, all were surpassingly excellent. The wine made the archbishop and the trio merry; and, on Mr. Beckford commending it, the prelate sent several pipes the next day for his acceptance. Unluckily, the hour for the queen's evening excursion had arrived, and the archbishop was called upon to accompany her. The Marquis of Marialva, as Master of the Horse, was forced to go also; and Mr. Beckford, being left alone, by the guidance of the lay brother, was led along through a labyrinth of passages, and let "out of the palace with as little ceremony as if he had been a goose turned adrift on a common."

His adventures at Mrs. Staits', and amusement with Mrs. Guildermeister, on the occasion of an entertainment given by the former lady in a damp garden, seventy feet long by thirty-two, illuminated with thirty or forty lanterns, were quizzed unsparingly. A dish of prawns, not

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the better for having been kept, united with the gloom over the garden, made them imagine they were all jumbled together in the infernal regions. What a transition from the palace, the archbishop, his roasted pigs, his splendid dessert and wine—to a banquet in a place resembling the infernal regions. The quizzing of the fair host proceeded; and Mr. Beckford seemed to be unmerciful towards the little, slender-waisted, wild-eyed Mrs. Staits, who was neither unpleasing nor flinty-hearted.

Riding over the wild hills and the Cintra mountains at half-past six in the morning, with the Marquis of Marialva, relays of horses having been placed beforehand at proper stations, the day beautiful, and the sky of a lovely azure, they first visited the Convent of Nossa Senhora da Pinha, a small pile of white buildings, seen afar when off the coast. From thence, the view was of immense extent; a vast space of the Atlantic being full in front. The Moorish and other objects in the vicinity, principally ruins of small note, were, probably, some of them as old as the Roman era. Some plants of great delicacy, and others remarkable for their fragrance as



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flowers and aromatic herbs, seemed to infuse new life into the human frame, and make it sensible of the value of existence. Descending an acclivity among rocks, and then following a narrow track over savage eminences, the party arrived at the entrance of the Cork Convent. It was a settlement for another Robinson Crusoe. Ledges of rock, and then a smooth level of greensward, on which cattle were browsing, and bells tinkling, led to the hermitage, scooped out of the naked rock, and lined with the cork tree bark, both roof and floor. Shrubberies and garden plots, dispersed among the moss-covered rocks, lay about in pleasing confusion; while a transparent rill conducted among green bushes of lavender and rosemary, ran gurgling along. That day, the installation of a prior took place, the appointment being in the Marialva family. The party were pressed to stay and dine with the prior; but, it being yet early, they set out to visit the renowned cliff called Pedra d'Alvidrar, a striking feature of the celebrated promontory called the Rock of Lisbon.

Passing by the woods which surround the charming village of Collares, they advanced

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near the margin of the cliff, which is lofty, and almost perpendicular. A number of boys followed the travellers, and five of them descended the frightful precipice with great unconcern. The coast there is highly picturesque, consisting of bold projections and pyramidal rocks, standing one behind the other in theatrical perspective, and that farthest out crowned by a lofty tower, which answers the purpose of a lighthouse. The description of the ocean and cliff scene here, Mr. Beckford has given in his happiest style. "Words could not," he said, "explain the bloom of the atmosphere, and silvery light of the sea. Shut in by shattered cliffs, and an amphitheatre of rocks, deep coves, broken and rent shores, and the roar of the Atlantic pouring its world of waters into retired and resounding caverns, he thought it no wonder that the lively imagination of the ancients pictured it as the abode of Tritons and sea gods. The incrusted caves scooped out by the restless waves, the broken waters falling in canopies of foam, and the flickering beams of light through irregular and shattered arches of rock, the gloom, the murmurs, and almost musical sounds, and the

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saline atmospheric odour—all these combined produced such a bewildering effect upon the senses, that a mind poetically given might easily be affected by a belief in something supernatural being connected with the spot. He only wondered his own imagination did not deceive him, as that of the ancients had deceived them. The solitude, of itself, was striking. During half-an-hour which he remained there, apart from his friends, the only living thing he saw was one sea-bird, that perched itself upon an insulated rock near the mouth of the cavern, where he had been thus long spell-struck.

The noise of the sea and complication of sounds so stunned his ears, that it was some moments before he could distinguish the voices of his friends, who had been hunting for curiosities, telling him to mount, and rejoining the Marquis and his attendants, to proceed to the Cork Convent. The clouds opportunely shielded them on the way back, after a delightful ride. At their quarters, they met the colonel of the Cascais regiment, Luis de Miranda, the old abade, and a whole synod of monks, with bald pates and venerable beards; and, the Marquis

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having performed his devotions, dinner was served in a most splendid style—pillaus of many kinds, the most delicious quails, and pyramids of rice and saffron. A luxurious dessert followed, consisting of the choicest fruits and sweetmeats, peaches and nectarines being in profusion.

The abade got into a dispute with the brotherhood, and the arguments were vehement. Two or three of the party, little interested in the noisy disputation, climbed into the arbutus, bay, or myrtle trees, the foliage exhaling odours on the slightest pressure, lulled by the sound of the distant breaking waves on the shore they had visited some hours before. There they pounded the cones of the pines, which have an agreeable almond taste. The hour grew late, but the old abade continued his argument vociferously, appealing to the father-guardian of the convent to back him out. Thus delayed, the party did not reach Cintra until they had wandered about for two hours in clouds and darkness, the Marchioness of Marialva and her children rating the abade, he being the cause of the late arrival of the Marquis, by his long-winded arguments, and obstinacy in dispute.

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Another excursion made in the month of September, 1787, was to Penha Verde; the morning all bloom, the mists rising from the hills, and the whole scene tempting to a ride after breakfast on the road to Collares. The air was soft and fragrant, rain having fallen, and refreshed the whole surface of the country. Numerous heaths had started into bloom. Cork trees, in gnarled and crooked forms, overhung the roads; and the way sides were covered with large white lilies streaked with pink. The season, perhaps the most beautiful of the year, was commencing. Penha Verde Mr. Beckford describes as a lovely spot. The villa is low, with flat roofs and a loggia, projecting from one end, looked like the buildings in Gaspar Poussin's landscapes. Before one of the fronts was a square parterre, with a fountain in the centre, niches in the walls, and antique busts. Above the walls a variety of trees and shrubs rose to a great height, amid a mass of the richest foliage. The pines of a bright green colour imparted the name verde, Penha Verde, the rocky point or head, to the place. These trees, exceedingly picturesque, tradition states

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were planted by Don John de Castro, whose heart rests in a marble tomb near by; but time has greatly altered the aspect of the place. The deep forests which once covered the face of the country have disappeared; and gardens, marked with artificial decorations of various kinds, have taken their place. The population alone, it was probable, was just the same—equally ready to crouch beneath a corrupt tyranny, and equally insensible to the voice of honest patriotism. It was a spot which recalled sad recollections, and invaded the ear with mysterious whisperings of perished things. This course of thought was interrupted by a train of carriages and mounted personages riding up to the gate of the villa. Mr. Beckford had expected some visitors, but a whole deluge rushed in upon him. Among the company was the Conde de San Lorenzo, the Prior of San Juliaô, a prime favourite of the archbishop, who tumbled over a fine Dutch Bible lying upon the table in a manner well calculated to alarm the feelings of a lover of books—pressing upon it, and creasing the covers. Some of the musicians in the train were in full performance. Others of the company were dis-

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puting upon parables, miracles, and martyrdom, in which they exhibited the grossest ignorance —affirming it was Henry VIII. who personally knocked out the brains of Thomas à Becket, and that Luther was the Beast mentioned in the Apocalypse. Their host got lowered somewhat in their estimation by relating the real period of Thomas à Becket's murder, at the same time jesting with them, and declaring the beast intended was Œcolampadius. So fine and hard a name, making sound triumph over sense, settled all their bickerings, and then they sat down to dinner, while, before the dessert was completed, a whole bevy of ladies from the palace came riding into the Englishman's grounds on palfreys and bourras, and tempted the master of the quinta to leave his guests, and join them on horseback, galloping through alleys of citron and orange trees, and breaking leaves off flowers and fruit unsparingly. The sound of the music from the dwelling, and the charms of the ladies, added to the interest of the scene, which was cut short by the fair ones being all forced to return to close attendance upon the queen by seven o'clock; and most anxious were they, as

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the hour approached. But the queen and the royal family were not far off, at the Marialva villa, where they were going to take refreshments, and see an exhibition of fireworks. When the time arrived, the stranger went to see the royal party, and was conducted by the Grand Prior and Don Pedro into a snug boudoir commanding the Great Pavilion, which appeared to advantage by the light of innumerable tapers reflected from lustres of crystal. Some of the ladies were seated on the floor, crosslegged, in the Oriental fashion; and among the company was a dwarf Negress, who carried on a flirtation with a handsome Moor belonging to the Marquis of Marialva.

The queen, followed by her sister and daughter-in-law, the Princess of Brazil, seated herself in front of the latticed window, behind which Mr. Beckford was placed. He described her manner as dignified and conciliatory, and as if born to command, yet still to be beloved. Justice and clemency were her characteristics; and the courtly decorum and respect observed in her presence were remarkable. Of all present, the Marquis of Marialva alone seemed to preserve

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his ease and cheerfulness. Some of the princes looked as if they suffered from ennui, their mouths being in a perpetual yawn, and their eyes wandering from object to object in right royal vacancy. A rigorous etiquette confined the Infants of Portugal within their palaces, and they were then seldom known to mingle, even incog., with the crowd; so that their flattering smiles, or confidential yawns, were not lavished upon common observers. This sort of embalming princes alive, after all, he observed, was no bad policy. "It keeps them sacred; it concentrates the royal essence—too apt, alas! to evaporate by exposure. What is so liberally paid for by the willing tribute of the people as a rarity of exquisite relish, should not be suffered to turn mundungus. However the individual may dislike this severe regimen, state pageants might have the goodness to recollect for what purpose they are bedecked and worshipped."

The Conde de Sampayo, the lord in waiting, handed the tea to the queen, and went down on both knees to present it. This ceremony over, the fireworks were announced, and the royal sufferer, followed by the other sufferers, ad-

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journed to a neighbouring apartment, while the Marchioness of Marialva, her daughters, and the Countess of Lumiares, came up and took possession of the windows in the apartment where Mr. Beckford was sitting. The whirling and whizzing of the fireworks delighted the Countess, who, though then hardly sixteen, had been four years married. Mr. Beckford remarked that her "youthful cheerfulness, light hair, and fair complexion, put me so much in mind of my Margaret,* that I could not help looking at her with a melancholy tenderness: her being with child increased the resemblance; and, as she sat in the recess of the window, discovered at intervals by the blue light of rockets bursting high in the air, I felt my blood thrill as if I beheld a phantom; and my eyes were filled with tears." This imaginativeness of Mr. Beckford was a strong trait in his character all through life. He could never speak of his wife without deep emotion. It was the cause of his reveries, of his abstractions—sometimes in the midst of lively scenes; and of his love of solitude, at times when his feelings were full of that which he would fain conceal in society.

* Dead about sixteen months before.

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The time was now drawing near when he quitted his Portuguese friends. Before his departure, he visited several objects of interest which he had neglected to do previously; and among them a chapel inlaid with jasper and lapis lazuli, in the church of St. Roch, but was disappointed in finding no showman. The cathedral, he found, had been so shattered by the earthquake, that it exhibited few traces of ever having made part of a mosque; and the priests could talk of little but reliques, and traces of the work of St. Anthony's fingers upon the walls of chapels, where the saint made a sign of the cross in the hardest marble in a moment to scare away the devil, as recorded by a picture placed near the spot. There were also some holy crows that had attended upon St. Vincent. "The very birds are in being," said a sacristan. "What—the individual crows!" "Not exactly," he replied, in a whisper; "but their immediate descendants!"

Mr. Beckford found the books in the library of the Theatine Convent in the same confusion in which they had been left by the earthquake; half were lying in dusty heaps tumbled out of their shelves. He drove home with a party he had picked up on his way, to dine with him.

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Among those who came was a young man, Senhor Manuel Maria, one of the most original of God's creatures. He was in an eccentric, lively mood; and a thousand quaint conceits, flashes of merriment, and satirical remarks, fell from him. He then shifted his tone to compositions, in which he mingled great depth of thought, with pathetic touches, which thrilled and agitated his hearers. "He possessed the secret of that enchantment which, at the will of its master, animates or petrifies." He exhibited some lines which he said were worth half the Lusiad. Mr. Beckford, however, acknowledged he was not sufficiently initiated in the Portuguese tongue, its force and idiom, to be a competent judge. At the dessert, the abade before spoken of, produced an immense tray of dried fruits and sweetmeats, which had been presented to him, and over which, while feasting, he made all sorts of rodomontades in praise of the Portuguese nation, till he deafened the company; and then, after tasting and complimenting, the party set off to visit the holy crows, to support which a certain sum had been allotted from time immemorial. They were found comfortably roosted in the recess of a cathedral cloister, well-fed, and

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duly venerated. The story went that when St. Vincent was martyred at the Cape of that name, the birds, out of regard for so good and exemplary a personage, pursued his murderers, and tore out their eyes, attending the boat which bore his body all the way to Lisbon. The party was full of admiration at the sleekness of the crows, and the long anecdotes related about their holiness. The Grand Prior proposed moving off, to see the illuminations in honour of the Infanta, consort to Don Gabriel, of Spain, who had brought forth a prince. The fireworks were excellent. Then they had sermons from monks about the illuminations in better worlds, music and singing. Supper closed the sight-seeing. Mr. Beckford longed to enlarge a little upon the Legend of the Holy Crows, but restrained himself, as it would be ungrateful, having been so well treated by the crow-fanciers.

END OF VOL. I.

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